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TWILIGHT REVERIES

Twilight Reveries

Life and How to Live It

By
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With grateful appreciation
I dedicate this book
To my
RADIO COMMITTEE
who made possible these
Twilight Reveries

FOREWORD

THESE sermons were delivered on successive Sunday evenings from June 2, to October 13, 1929, over WJZ and associated stations of the National Broadcasting Company. The services were conducted by the Greater New York Federation of Churches, and sponsored by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The length of the service was one hour and the limit of each sermon, twenty minutes. It will be seen that while the sermonic form has been adhered to throughout, it was not possible to dwell upon the setting of the text with its historical and theological implications, as would otherwise be fitting. It was sought to make each address practical and spiritual, to present Christian truth without controversy, as people of all shades of belief and disbelief would be listening in. The purpose of each sermon was to bring a message of courage and inspiration. Realizing that the message would be listened to by unnumbered thousands in hospital, asylum and prison, those who suffered in body, in mind or in estate, and a vast number shut in by reason of age or physical limitation, we have tried to make the message one of faith and hope and of good cheer. The thousands of letters which have been received from my "radio parishioners" lead me to believe that such a message was needed, and has brought hope and cheer to those who were sorely troubled and greatly cast down in spirit.

The desire for these sermons by those who were listening in was so great that they were mimeographed and mailed on request through the generous help of the Committee who supported the Twilight Reveries. Later there were so many

requests for the sermons in permanent form that we now send them forth with the hope that those who heard them may remember " as they read " some good purpose formed as they first fell upon their ears and may be encouraged to nourish that holy purpose. To those who did not hear them, it is hoped they will come as a message of deep conviction that may bear good fruit.

We must all greatly appreciate the fact that the National Broadcasting Company is supplying without cost for these Christian messages time and facilities which would cost large sums of money if paid for at regular rates.

May God grant, that the marvelous opportunity offered by radio for the spread of the Gospel, may be the means of greatly quickening the religious life of America!

C. L. G.

New York City.

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I

WILL MEN EVER OUTGROW RELIGION?

For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.—ACTS 17: 28.

BEFORE we can intelligently ask ourselves whether religion has been, and will be, a necessity to human life, we must have some clear and intelligent conception of what religion really is. Religion has to do with the relation of man to God, and, specifically, is man's recognition of the existence of God, a confession of His power, and a desire to do Him honour. Compressed into a single phrase, it may be described as a system of faith and worship. As a matter of fact—in the sense of worshipping God or gods—all nations and all ages have been religious. You will recall Plutarch's famous sentence: "Traversing the world, you may find towns without coin, without schools, without theatres; but a town without a temple of prayer, no one ever saw." It is true that, now and then, somebody rises to deny the existence of God; but in most cases it is true now, as it was in Plato's time, that atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the understanding. The thoughtful still insist that the footprints of God are on every side clearly to be traced. Viewing nature, men are fain to adopt the words of the Bible and say: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork." In similar vein the far-gazer into the heavenly spaces cries out: "The undevout astronomer is mad!" The lover of the out-of-doors expresses his testimony in the soulful lines of Thomas Edward Brown:

" A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine."

David saw the glory of God written in the heavens, and if he who could not pierce their heights nor count the multitude of the stars felt as he did, what ought to be our feeling with each new discovery which makes the heavens wider, and more crowded with yet vaster hosts? Another world is opened to our vision through the lenses of the microscope, as infinitesimal and marvelous as the sweeping worlds are innumerable and wonderful. With each new revelation of the marvels and hidden powers of nature, the wonder grows, and in the face of it all, no man, for very long, can balance himself on an interrogation point!

But our concern is not with matters of theory but of life. The test which our subject asks us to consider is the test of actual experiment. Can a man get along without religion? Can any man, or nation, or age, come to its best without its power? When we are asked the question, " Will the coming man worship? " one always feels like asking a series of questions such as: " Will the coming man breathe? Will he eat and sleep? Will he love, and suffer and die? " We look upon to-morrow in the afterglow of yesterday. And so, in the light of the past we ask, does a man need religion? Men have sought for health and sought for gold. They have ploughed stormy seas and cut their way through gloomy forests. They have risked everything that they might find a new land and add a new name to the world's geography,

or a new gem to some sovereign's diadem. But with all the searching of the ages, no search can for a moment be compared with the search after God. Millions, bowing before heathen altars, smoking with the sacrifices of uncounted æons; fire-worshippers and sun-worshippers paying the awful price of pain, all have sought to find their way to God. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" has been the cry of the ages. Paul found Greeks on the Acropolis at Athens worshipping an unknown God, and bore testimony to the fact of the universal search, though God was "not far from every one of us."

You tell me that all sorts of crimes have been committed in the name of religion, and I shall not deny it. It has been mighty, both to make and to mar the history of men, and it will not down. In the jungle and in the palace, in the slums and in the college, the question which overmasters every other question is that of religion. Little by little, men have come to understand the nature of God. The thoughtful no longer worship an "absentee God," but One "in whom we live, and move, and have our being"; who is immanent in the affairs of men; who is afflicted in our afflictions, who rejoices in our triumphs; who is a Power that makes for righteousness, everywhere.

The fact of God is written large on the pages of human history. When men forgot God, gloom gathered, and the chroniclers called those centuries the Dark Ages. When Girolamo Savonarola and John Huss, and, later, Martin Luther came to stir the religious consciousness of the world, a new hope dawned in the hearts of men and light broke in upon the darkness. When England was far gone in spiritual indifference, there echoed the brave Puritan tread which shook the world, and a Bunyan could go to Bedford Jail saying, "I will stay here until the moss grows over my eyebrows, rather than deny my Lord." Later, when the

love of selfish ease and the prostitution of holy things had well-nigh ruined the land, it is the preaching of a Wesley and a Whitefield which changes the face and the fate of a nation, and in the honouring of God, another England is born. Our own country was founded in the fear of God. Our ancestors came to this country, not for money or conquest. They ventured their lives and their fortunes to found a religious commonwealth. "They were not plump, rosy-cheeked Englishmen who came to our shores, but an earnest-eyed race, stiff from their long wrestling with the Lord in prayer." If men are as bad as they are, even with the restraints of religion in operation, what would they be without it? Every man knows, without any argument, that if you could take out of any city to-day the Church of God and that for which it stands, the ruin of that city would be accomplished. We have a civilization which has grown up with our religion. We talk about help for the unfortunate. Where did the world learn that? The Church of the living God taught it. There was never a poorhouse on the face of the earth until the Church taught sympathy for the poor. Whence came our hospitals? The Church of God set them up, inspired by the Nazarene. Whence came our universities? They were founded by the Church of God. The oldest college seal in America has the same legend as the oldest college seal in England—"Christ and the Church." Religion and learning have gone hand-in-hand. Have you looked over the political map of to-day? It cannot be adjudged a simple accident that the line of popular free government runs parallel with that of the development of religious life.

But after all, the question is not so much one of *men* as of *man:* the need of religion is in the development of the life of the individual. As goes the individual so goes the state. Individualism and collectivism are not in antago-

nism; the one issues from the other. The individual must first be moved, and the mass moved by the individual. The chief trophy of religion in the life of the individual is the development of a quickened and sensitive conscience. Men will never outgrow the need of religion in their own souls. To be at peace with God, to have a "conscience void of offence" and quick to every call of duty—to have that, is to live. To practice the presence of God, to be assured that we never journey so fast or so far as to be without Him is to enjoy security and peace. Carlyle said in his old age: "The longer I live (and I am now within sight of the grave), the more clearly comes back to me the words I learned when a child: 'What is the chief duty of man? To glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.'" In that he was echoing the words of the Apostle: "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." To know the duty of the hour is wisdom; to do it, is virtue. But the power which sends us along the path of duty—ah, that is the immanent God, the power which all men need! The greatest loss that can come into any life is when the inner light fails. When a man is without God, he is without hope. He sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

I am not afraid of intellectual atheism. That is not a fixed habit of the mind, but rather the frantic gesture of a man who has lost his footing, perhaps while climbing the mountain for a larger view of the truth or, more likely, while walking in the path of dalliance. The thing which I fear is that practical atheism which tramps profanely over the sacred paths of human life, and forgets both God and man; that atheism which cares only for self and neglects the Christian law of life and service. The real atheists are not those who harangue on street-corners or in public parks. They are the men who traffic in human blood, who are more

anxious for personal plunder than for civic gain. The real atheists are the men who make such combinations as cut the widow's loaf in twain and decimate her scanty store, who call the Golden Rule an iridescent dream.

The growth of the ages has not been away from, but toward, religion. The world realizes, more and more, with every passing generation, that it cannot get along without it. We have had much talk of late with regard to the bettering of social conditions, and all that is said about that necessity is true. What we need in our time is not less interest in trade, in politics, but more conscience put into them; not less knowledge or wealth or taste, but a truer sense of the stewardship worthy of the servants of God. We are talking about making things easier—fewer hours, less work, a more comfortable place to live in, better clothes to wear, a happier lot in life. And all that will be a great gain, if only we have something else with it. What we need with better wages, is better purposes. A clean heart is the prime requisite for a life worth while. Some dream of a time when all men will be rich in dollars and would hail as the Millennium the day when all were millionaires. But the testimony of human experience has been and is, that the Millennium does not come in a coach and four. Most of God's heroes who have lifted the world up to the light, have gone on foot; and it would be far better to go on foot in the happy company of a clean heart and a good conscience, than to ride in a chariot, with sodden soul and a dead conscience.

Will man ever outgrow religion? So long as men are tempted by lust and greed and passion, so long they will need to be buttressed by Almighty God, that they may overcome their temptations by a strength greater than their own. In the battle which all men have to wage, the only combat that bids fair to be finally victorious is " the good fight of faith." So long as human nature is as selfish as

it is, and men like to have an easy rather than a useful life, so long will men need to have a vision of the things which outlast the stars, and to be compassed about with chariots and horsemen of God. So long as men have trials and disappointments to bear, so long as they see their hopes crumble and their ambitions go up in smoke, so long will they need the sustaining power of a religious faith.

These are days when insane asylums are crowded, when coroners are kept busy, and the marble slabs at the morgues filled. These are days when men, who have lost sight of God, throw back in the face of their Creator the life which He gave them, as a useless thing. Ah, friends, there is an infinite distance between the martyr and the suicide. The martyr holds all men so dear and their advantage of so great importance that he is willing to give up his life that he may serve them. And that is what a man does who has God within him. He goes to his death as a bridegroom might go to meet his bride. So did the martyrs of the arena who looked into the glaring eyes of the Numidian lions and went up to God from many a stake in winding sheets of flame.

But the suicide—he cares so little for his fellows that he thrusts all life and human interests aside, with one fell stroke of his hand. When things go hard with a man here, he needs to have his eyes kindled upon hopes which are eternal, and are not measured by the size of his bank account or the number of friends he counts. When my burdens are more than I can bear and disappointments overwhelm me, I go and pray, and find in that holy exercise the fulfilment of the promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

So long as there are aching hearts—aching over a bad and ill spent past—so long will men need the forgiveness of

God and the help of religion. So, judged by the past and the answer which the lives of men and our own souls give, I should say that men will *not* outgrow religion until they outgrow temptation, and sin, and sorrow, and death. And when that time comes, we shall have reached the Land where the disappointed are satisfied, where the misunderstood are appreciated, and where there is purity, and life, and love, and God.

II

LIFE'S SURPRISES

Jesus cometh, the door being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you.—JOHN 20: 26.

LIFE, in the main, is made up of orderly sequences, effects for which there appears to be an efficient, adequate and expected cause. We expect the orderly procession of the equinoxes and, for the most part, are not disappointed. We make our business ventures according to certain laws which have proven themselves to be trustworthy. We consider it wise in all departments of life to act upon certain well-defined laws of procedure. But while it is true that we pattern our lives in harmony with these laws, we do not go far before we find them infringed and superseded in the most unexpected fashion. These infringements upon our calculations are so many and so great that we sometimes think that the exception rather discounts than proves the rule, and we are fain to say, "It is always the unexpected that happens."

Nature herself is full of surprises; heat and cold mingle in the most surprising way. Sunshine and shadow are forever chasing one another across our skies. Our eyes constantly scan the heavens for approaching storms, and even the professional weather-prophet misses his guess so frequently that his delinquency has become a proverb. Nature unites with man to give us the most marvelous surprises. In the realm of physics, of chemistry and of electricity, we stand bewildered. Hidden forces marshal themselves. Not

only does the thunderbolt fall upon us out of the clear sky, but the lightnings stand champing their bits at our door and on copper hoofs they belt the world in a minute of time. The human voice speeds away a thousand miles at a leap. The viewless air is unexpectedly filled with messages, swarming each to his own, like homing pigeons to their cote. The inventor lifts himself with his whirring machine into the air and tops the mountains like a bird. When you come to human experiences, every heart has a lengthening tale of surprises and alarms. I suppose we are all most affected by what we call the painful surprises of life. Misfortunes come in a time when we do not look for them. It is when Belgium's capital has gathered her beauty and her chivalry —when " there is a sound of revelry by night " that the hoarse call to war halts the tripping feet of the dancers. It is when " soft eyes look love into eyes that speak again " and all goes merry as a marriage-bell, that the grating sound of the grinding of the iceberg breaks in upon the festivity of the *Titanic*. Adversity comes close on the heels of prosperity. Political defeat withers the laurels on the brow of the expectant candidate. The trusted friend betrays, the market turns. Disease steals in at the keyhole, and the mourners go about the streets. We plan to meet our enemies and put our batteries where they can mow down the avenues, but the enemy steals in upon us from the rear.

Our losses and sorrows come in forms such as no one could have expected them to come; no shrewdness nor prudence predict or prevent them. Everything is in the flux, and nothing seems good enough to last forever. It is the uncertainty of life that dashes the cup of hope from our lips, that makes the stoutest heart tremble; that breaks in upon the man who is saying, " Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry," with the cataclysmic sentence, " This night thy soul shall be

required of thee." You business men know all about uncertainties. When it looks like a springing market a war-cloud rises in Europe, or money grows tight, and away goes your market! In a single day your prognostications are overwhelmed and your sanguine hopes perish. I passed through a great establishment the other day and the proprietor said, "Notice that clerk; I will tell you about her later." When we had passed her he said, "I knew her when she was one of the Four Hundred. Her horses and carriages and liveried servants were the finest on the Drive in the old days; now she is working for fifteen dollars a week." When I asked the cause my friend said, "It all happened in a day. Her husband got on the wrong side of Wall Street."

The disaster of the unexpected is no new thing. It was always so. One day Jacob threw a coat of many colours over the devoted shoulders of his son Joseph, and none was so happy as he. The next day there was nothing left for him but a bloodstained coat and a breaking heart. To-day, David is fêted to the tune of harp and cymbal and the glad acclaim of the populace; to-morrow, he mounts to the throne, but the day after, the light of his life is going out. He passes out of the kingly city a wanderer and an exile.

The record of human misfortune, of unexpected disaster rushing down like storm and avalanche is too sad to dwell upon long. Is there any way in which we may be forewarned or forearmed for the unexpected? Must we always be broken hearted, and must humanity be driven at the point of the spear of destiny into an unrelenting sea? Watkinson of England said, years ago, that "we ought to *expect* the unexpected" and there is worldly wisdom in his saying. We are inclined to think that all things will continue as they are but when we reflect we remind ourselves that everything is

changing, that "time makes ancient good uncouth." Surprise, astonishment, amazement, overwhelm us. Is it not strange that, while we know so much about the heavens, can calculate the orbits of the sun and stars and the moon, and foretell the movements of eclipses a century ahead, we cannot even guess what will happen to us to-morrow? The surprises of the ages are not in fiction but in history; not in geology, but in biography. What are you going to do about it?

When you go aboard your steamer to embark for Europe, you will see that the decks are covered with boats, that every pair of davits is in commission. That means that the law has compelled every steamer to prepare for the unexpected; or, if you like it better, for the *expected*. It would look as if it were merely common prudence so to conduct ourselves in matters of business and life, and daily affairs, and personal risk, and financial venture, so that we might be protected against possible disaster, and so take oil in our vessels, with our lamps.

But these surprises are not all on one side, nor are all our surprises of burden and loss. Not all our ventures result in disappointment. If no man dared to venture how little would be won. What happy stories there are to tell of the victory of the unexpected! You know a thousand men who came to the city penniless but who, by a fortunate turn of the tide or steadfast attention to their tasks, attained independence. Not all hospital stories are of wrecked health and disease. Thousands upon thousands, pain-racked, go under the skilful hand of physician or surgeon, and emerge with laughter and joy. There is a sweet, happy chapter of darkness changed to light, of sighing, changed to song.

I have advocated preparation for the unexpected things of disaster and loss; and, it may be, that we need quite as much preparation for the unexpected things of health

and wealth and prosperity. It may be, too, that a man who succeeds needs prevenient grace just as much as he who fails. More men are ruined by financial success than by financial failure. In the surprises of life we need all our sense and all our character to see that we be not exalted unduly by success, or cast down, above measure, by sorrows and loss.

But I have only made my appeal to men as they are and to things that come. I have only spoken of the help which reflection and judgment, reserve and caution can give us with which to face the uncertainties of life. I wish now, and especially, to direct attention to the glorious triumph which comes to men, whatever may be their position, when they realize that through all and over all unexpected things in laughter or in tears, in success or in disaster, there is the presence, and power, and uplift, of the very present God.

After all, the greatest surprises of life are here. How the things which we looked not for nor hoped not for become ours. Haunted by our fears, oppressed by unspeakable imaginings, how God has lifted us out of the darkness! The great surprise of all the ages is, that a sinner can be cleansed from his sin and the burden of his remorse swept away! The greatest miracles are not the miracles of the laboratory, but of the soul. It is an incredible salvation that God gives us, making the lowest of His children priests and kings unto Himself, binding up broken hearts and forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. "Thou surprisest us with the blessings of Thy goodness," cries the Psalmist. I often quote the words of the prophet: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them."

See the transformation of victory in the individual life. Who could have supposed that a Matthew or a Peter or a

Paul could have been so wonderfully transformed in an hour; that a publican between the tree-top and the ground could experience a new life; that a woman of bad repute could have the dross of an evil life burned out of her, a whole city see the light of the Redeemer and feel His power in a single night? God does not leave His children as prey for the unexpected. The glorious preparation for the time of stress is the practice of the presence of God. " What time I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord."

Our text belongs to a period when the awful tragedy of Calvary is passed. What to Jesus' disciples seemed an impossibility had happened—their Lord had gone, not to a throne but to a cross. They had heard His agonizing cry; they had seen Him nailed to the rood and laid in a borrowed tomb with Cæsar's seal upon it and a Roman guard to keep the seal intact. Hopeless and discouraged, they were going their way, when the unexpected happens! Without even the swinging of a door their Lord stands with them and says, " Peace be unto you." This time even Thomas, the doubter, is fain to cry, " My Lord and my God! "

If there is any victory which is needed in our time, it is the victory over the unexpected. We talk about environment as if that settled life; but experience has demonstrated that there is something greater than environment. No matter what unexpected thing may come, God will be there. Falling asleep on his pillow of stone, Jacob dreams and the glorious revelation of the dream so moves his soul that he is never the same man again, and dying in Egypt he cries, " I remember Luz," which is Bethel.

Many things have happened to us which were unexpected and disappointing, but they were really the best things which could have happened. Paul said, " I know how to be abased and how to be happy; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to

abound and to suffer need." If Christ could do that for Paul, He can do it for us.

" Ships sail east and ships sail west,
However the winds may blow;
It's the set of the sail and not the gale,
That tells where the ship shall go."

The message of the text is a message for these days and all days—for your heart and every heart. " Peace be unto you." If you walk in narrow ways, if you are utterly discouraged, if you are a prisoner, not of hope but of fear and dread, it may still be true for you, that Jesus cometh, " the door being shut." The problem which my text unfolds is the problem of victory over the impossible and the unexpected. The program of Jesus is to bind up broken hearts, to preach glad tidings to the poor, and to the captive. It is the program of a love unspeakable, which every man needs, and, having which, no man need be discouraged or dismayed.

When the last day is ended
And the nights are through,
When the last sun is buried
In its grave of blue,

When the stars are snuffed like candles,
And the seas no longer fret,
And the winds unlearn their cunning,
And the storms forget.

When the last lip is palsied,
And the last prayer said—
Love shall reign immortal,
While the world lies dead.

" If I were God, the sorrows of the world would break my heart," said Goethe. As a matter of fact, that was exactly what they did. He gave His only begotten Son to death on

the Cross, and became Himself the omnipotent Sufferer that He might comfort men in sorrow and redeem men from sin.

It is a comfort to read in our text that " Jesus came, the door being shut and stood in the midst." Sinful and surly wardens keep the door of the heart's holy place; fear and doubt and shame and anxiety have mounted guard. Right glad am I that human limitations do not limit Him. He is master of the unexpected and in ways that we did not know and could not expect makes to the needy hearts His holy revelation. He brings with Him the one panacea for trouble, *the peace of God.* He calls it " My peace " and says " not as the world gives, give I unto you."

The nations have an armoured peace, where from the portholes of their dreadnaughts they gaze at each other and laying their hands on their overwhelming artillery, they challenge each other to keep the peace. Classes and organizations view each other askance and keep a peace which is but a truce of war, but the peace of God is quite another thing. It is of that that Edwin Arnold sings:

" Peace beginning to be
Deep as the sleep of the sea,
When the stars their faces glass
In its blue tranquillity.
Love which is sunlight of peace
Age by age to increase
Till anger and hate are dead
And sorrow and death shall cease."

In the solemn mystery and blessed revelation of this peace we may face life's unexpectedness with holy confidence, and though every avenue of hope may be choked and every door of approach closed and locked, our blessed Lord may yet enter, bringing to the perplexed and troubled heart, His unexpected and blessed peace.

III

THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION

Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.
—JOHN 15: 14.

RELIGION has to do with the soul's thirst for God and the practice of it must therefore be the practice of the presence of God. With the development of religion there came a corresponding development in worship. As flowers preceded botany and rocks preceded geology, so religion preceded theology. Valuable as the science of religion is, men came to realize that first of all the requirements of God were to deal justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him. Theology is a way of thinking, religion is a way of living. Theories change—this, that or the other article of theological creed may come into prominence, but the one thing which never changes is the value of a good life. The swing of such a life outlasts the sun and we are all concerned in its development. When George Frederick Watts was offered a baronetcy, he wrote to a friend, "Tell the Queen that the only title I will take is the one she once gave me—'The Painter of Eternal Things.'"

In the Judgment which Jesus describes, when the orthodox had affirmed that they had observed the proprieties, the answer came, in substance, "What good did it do you? Were you thereby kind and merciful and true? You had a good creed, did you get a good life out of your creed?" "I love the Church and the ritual of the Church," you say.

"I was baptized. I studied the history of the Church. I observed its rules. I come to Holy Communion." If you were baptized, did you also receive the divine chrism of the Master? Did you realize His life of sacrifice as you received the Holy Communion? Did you go to the table of your Lord in love with your neighbours and determined to lead a good life? What would your orthodoxy or catholicity amount to in the Great Assize if the Judge were to say: "I was hungry and you gave Me no meat; I was a stranger and you took Me not in, naked and ye clothed Me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not"?

Jesus taught life on the plains of Galilee, on the Horns of Hattin, in the fish-market at Capernaum, rather than theology in the court of the Temple. He was always looking for those who needed Him. One day there was a poor man by the pool of Bethesda. He had been there twenty-eight years. Think of it! twenty-eight years is a long time to you even in your round of business and pleasure, but how long would it seem to a man who was sick and poor and had no friends, and every day was like every other day—helpless, hopeless and loveless? One of our commentators has said the man did not want help. He was a professional beggar. And men are not wanting who, in our time, insist that the paralytics among us—physically, morally and socially—do not want to be any better. All we need to give now is the answer of Jesus. He did not think so. The men of that day did not notice the paralytic by the pool. Some passed him for perhaps a score of years and never saw him. Perhaps they did not want to see him, and in that they were not much different from us. There was a poor man, legless or armless, sitting on the sidewalk the other day, but we did not see him. There was a poor fellow on crutches selling shoestrings and pencils—we never noticed him. There was a white-faced girl from a sweatshop stand-

ing up in the street car—we did not offer her a seat. A man had fallen on the sidewalk—a crowd of hoodlums around him. We noticed the crowd, but we did not go to help the man—we were going to a Home Missions gathering and could not stop.

I recall that the pool of Bethesda was not far from the Temple in Jerusalem, and I presume the sound of worship there came down to the poor paralytic. I presume the priest was very careful to see that the fire did not go out on the altar, but no one thought it worth while to keep the fires of hope burning in the heart of the end-man in the procession of the incompetents. But one day a man who was different came that way. He ran his eye over the crowd and picked out the man whom the others had forgotten. And before that man had finished the doleful story of his long and helpless waiting, he was on his feet and the joy of a new-found life was thrilling every nerve. Jesus was always doing that thing, seeing the man others did not notice, paying attention to those whom others had forgotten. So He picked out the fishermen whom the politicians had passed by. Out of a crowd of watchers He saw little Zacchæus in the tree and invited Himself to go home with him. Of all the crowds who were casting their rich gifts into the treasury, He picked out an inconspicuous widow, put her on a pedestal high enough for the world to see and is going to keep her there until the crack of doom. There was a woman who came to draw water at the well where He sat. Any other Jew would not have seen her, for she was mentally uncouth, her reputation gone, a moral bankrupt. But she was a spiritual millionaire and the little city was drinking the water of life before the sun went down.

He was at a party; it was in the summer-time and the door was open, and a woman with her hair down her back came in. Nobody in the company would have seen her for a

ten-dollar bill, though some of them may have known her too well. A great soul was springing up, longing for purity, and Jesus met the longing. He showed her that she was rich in what too many are poor, and He taught them that love was the greatest thing in the world.

And even when He came to die, His eye rested on and He talked last with a criminal, and if this record be true, He went home to Heaven carrying a saved robber in His arms!

How many in our time suffer from spiritual strabismis and myopia! Yet if we are to be His followers who went about doing good, our eyes must be alert to see and our hands open to help. You can see from what the Master did, what *we* ought to be doing if we are to follow His steps and so be His friends. The value of the act will depend upon the motives which are behind it. What are your ideals? What do you really desire to be? As gravitation, ether, electricity and a thousand other natural forces work in silence and out of sight, so spiritual forces must accomplish their great task, if the result of life is to be what it ought to be. Goodness is better than goods, and a white robe is more regal than a purple one. Unless you feel the yearning after God, you may be sure that you are but a cumberer of the ground. The great question is not so much where have you arrived, but which way are you facing; not what have you accomplished, but what is your motive and what are you trying to do?

Mysterious forces are all about us. They are occult but mighty. No man has seen gravitation, but apples fall and rivers run to the sea. The careless do not see the waves of the air, but they bring to all men light and heat and sound. No man knows what electricity really is but the light of the street, the whiz of the trolley, the tick of the telegraph all declare it. If these forces are mysterious, so are the forces

of the spirit of God in the growth of character. The law condemns the act; the Gospel condemns or acquits the spirit. Murder is not in the act but in the heart. Uncleanness is not in the touch but in the thought. In our time, men have been taught that an act in restraint of trade may be a crime without theft or forgery. If a man gains wealth by wickedness and holds it in selfishness, he loses his soul not only hereafter but now. The soul is the measure of the man. If a millionaire soul has a million dollars, he will be none the worse for it, as his soul will tell him how to use it. But if the millionaire soul is forced to sing, "*Cleon has a thousand acres, not one have I,*" he will not therefore have to leave the ranks of God's millionaires.

No ability is really an excuse for badness. The soul has no relation to the product of the brush or the chisel or the brain. Many an artist has prided himself that he was a Bohemian and cites Burns and Byron and a score of others in his defense. If you want to be a Bohemian you cannot fellowship with Wordsworth and Browning and Tennyson, Emerson and Lowell. You may take your artists from the ranks of the unmoral and debauched, but commend me rather to that noble man who left the city that he might dwell in the open with God, who found his delight in the Word of God, and inspired by Him wrought upon immortal canvas, *The Gleaners, The Angelus, The Sowers, The Man with the Hoe*—Jean Millet.

Many an operatic singer has the "primrose path of dalliance trod," but the queen of them all, Jenny Lind, left the stage at the zenith of her powers. Sitting one day where the gentle tides come rolling in at Ostend, a Bible in her lap and her eyes on the glories of the setting sun, some one asked her why she had stepped down from her throne in the day of her coronation. She laid her hand on the open Bible and said, "It made me think little of this, and (point-

ing to the great sun) nothing of that, and so I gave it up without regret for a greater life." No man can live the great life unless his eyes are on the eternities.

Each year at my home in the country, I used to practice the dying request of one of Walter Scott's characters who called his son to his bedside and said, "Jock, my boy, ye might be a-stickin' in a tree now and then. It will be growin' when you're sleepin'." So each year I tried to set out something that might be bearing fruit when I was sleeping the long sleep. One day I was setting some shade-trees. I had thought long about it and carefully prepared the soil. Only a few rods distant were the great elms that I had played under as a child, where my mother used to walk with me in the Sabbath twilight when the great mellow-hearted stars were beginning to blaze. Across the years I can hear her mellow tones in the sweet hymn she used to sing:

> *"I love to steal awhile away*
> *From every cumbering care,*
> *And spend the hours of setting day,*
> *In humble, grateful prayer."*

I reflected that this tree of mine would be lifting its head to the sunlight and storm long after the hand which planted it had lost its cunning. If a tree is to outlast a man, one might well seek for it the help of every benign influence in earth or sky, and to set it out seemed to me as solemn as a sacrament.

So I shook the earth about its roots and prayed that the law of gravitation might hold it secure, that the ocean far away would remember it and send misty caldrons out of its depth and break them on its thirsty roots in summer shower and evening dew. I besought the sun to grant it light and life and asked that the swinging seasons might never forget

their turn and that all the stars and planets might play their part in the growing of a tree that should be good enough to last a century like its neighbours across the way.

I lifted myself from my task saying, " So it takes the sun and the sea, the light and the dark, the summer and the winter, the whole solar system and a great God to grow a tree." Just then a childish laugh arrested me and I noticed that my little boy was watching me from the road. I forgot the tree face to face with a greater life. A century or two and my tree will have met its fate and gone back to the sod from which it sprang, but that little boy of mine—ah, that is a life of infinitely greater sweep. What are suns and systems now! He will be living when these have wrapped themselves in the ashes of their own undoing, and every star has burned to its socket, and gone out. I must teach my boy that it will take a noble soul and a great purpose and a mighty God to grow a life that is good enough to last forever. God forbid that any one should ever think that he can grow a noble life in godless soil, spurred only by ambitions that sting and blast.

If you want to know about doctrine, you will find that in the doing of the will of God; and if you want to know how the Master feels about it, remember the words of my text, " Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

IV

THE DEFENSE OF THE CITY

For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

—ZECHARIAH 2: 5.

THE prophecy of Zechariah was a great advance on the prophecies of his contemporaries. These prophecies were full of war. The kingdom was to be set up by conquest. The contemporary prophets would rebuild Jerusalem on the old limits; they would judge the future by the past. But Zechariah says, " God's plans are unfolding. You cannot put the eagle back again into its shell." You can watch that thought in the unfolding of the Bible itself. The conscience of the Old Testament is in the main quite another thing from the conscience of the New. Things which these patriarchs did not understand were revealed by Christ and there were many things which He Himself could not tell His disciples as they were not ready to bear them.

Old-time defenses were good enough for old-time attacks. Our fathers set up great forts of granite—all unconscious of the fact that the time would come when the very granite itself would become a missile of death under the impact of the terrific fire which would be directed against it, so the humblest earthworks would be a better protection than the proudest granite fort.

The words which lead up to my text may be fairly interpreted as a protest against narrowing the limits of God's revelation. It is a lively figure which the prophet presents.

He seeks a young man—" a mason's apprentice," George Adams calls him—who is attempting to define the limits for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He is searching for the old walls that the city may be rebuilt upon its former foundation. He would make it as of old, a fortress. Just here an angel visitant starts up, and greeting another angel, sends him to the apprentice. " Tell him," said the visitant, " that the New Jerusalem shall be a great city without any walls. Not that it shall be too large to be fortified, but because there will be no need of casting up any defenses, for Jehovah Himself shall be its defense." So the young man is not only prevented from making the city smaller but from making it a fortress.

Zechariah comes to bring a new message to Israel—a diviner message than any which had preceded it. He tells them that the measuring rods of the past will not do to set forth the sacred attainments of the future. Prophecies had foretold of a Messianic Jerusalem that should be the counterpart of the historic, but God will grant a more glorious fulfilment and an enrichment beyond anything which the past had ever contemplated. So for ourselves, we may say, we have no right to build the Church of to-morrow on the narrow lines of the Church of the past. Things that passed well enough when weapons were crude are defenseless against improved opposition. When I read the literal interpretation of a spiritual prophecy by some zealous but narrow disciple of past dispensations, I am fain to say in my heart, " Send another angel to stop the measuring of this poor apprentice."

My text suggests two contrasted defenses, and to these let me turn your thought. In the early days men gathered together for mutual defense and surrounded themselves with walls of masonry, with massive gates of timber and metal. Babylon and Nineveh gloried in their walls and walked in

complacence upon them while attacking nations stood helpless before them. How different the history of Jerusalem would read if she had made God her defense, but she did not. She built her own little walls. Heathen hands helped her to raise them up and heathen rites were enacted within them. She walked in the splendours of Solomon and forgot the glories of God. It was the gold and silver and the precious stones of the Temple that she was proud of, and she forgot the real glory of the Temple was the Shekinah that proceeded from the Holy of Holies and not from the architects.

Of Jerusalem, Jeremiah cried out, " Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." All the forces of righteousness that stand up for a nation are the battlements of God. All the forces of evil that battle for a nation are but breaches in her walls, though they stood entrenched behind Gibraltars of strength. When they wondered that the proudest cities of Sparta had no walls, the Spartans said, " Every man is a brick in our walls," and the Spartan simplicity and purity made the nation safe. No defense of a nation can stand unless God be in it, and if God be in it, no matter how defenseless that nation may be, it will astonish the world with its victories. Was there ever a more defenseless people than these thirteen states? But God was behind them. He had sifted the wheat of three nations for this planting and He would watch the harvest. Neither the painted savage nor the godless renegade, nor the hostile mother country could destroy it. The corner stone of the young republic was laid in righteousness and it began its first state document with the pious words: " In the name of God. Amen." I do not hesitate to quote over the first century of American history the promise of my text: " For I, saith the Lord, will be with thee, a wall of fire round about and will be the glory in the midst of thee."

And the message is not far to seek in the life of the Church of God in America. We can see through what great agonies the physical world has been built up. How strange is the statement of the Psalmist—"Thou hast founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods." If the earth had been built on granite foundations, we would have been sending our scientists and explorers to test it with pickaxe and shovel every day, but so unsubstantial, from the human standpoint, is the foundation that it seems as shifting as the tides of the sea. Indeed all nature seems to be in everlasting flux as though nothing were good enough to last forever. You climb the mountains this summer and they look like an aggregation of dirt and stone, but if you look carefully you see that they are great libraries, the record of untold ages. One page has the mark which earth's hidden fires have wrought; yonder the earthquake; there is its story of gigantic upheaval, and a little beyond are the marks where the grinding glaciers marked the ages with their gravers. So in the history of man and things, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted them of low degree."

Institutions that are hoary with age and seem to be entrenched beyond all human power, crumble in a night. W. L. Watkinson tells of one of England's cathedrals—five hundred years in the building, which now stands a gigantic ruin. Great rose windows have crumbled and the matchless stained glass which filled them lies in ruin at their base. The arches have fallen in, and tier after tier of matchless carvings have gone to mother dust. But not far away there was dedicated a humble chapel, nothing to recommend it by way of masonry or carpentry, none of the fine arts of architecture, but a humble place where simple souls gathered to worship God and where spiritual power was transmitted from soul to soul until the whole community felt

the thrill, and he reasons that when classic marbles stand in the way of men they must fall. It doth not appear what those men shall be; uncouth, coarse, unlovely, but within a soul that will shine when the stars have turned to dust and rivers have ceased to flow. God is at work. " Through the ages one increasing purpose runs."

The world was marshaled at Waterloo. How came the battle to turn as it did? Victor Hugo asks, " Was Napoleon defeated because a few fresh troops came up in a decisive hour? Did Wellington conquer because a little girl said to a Prussian general, ' Go this way, and not that '? " He answers, " No. A little rain falling at an unexpected hour changed the face of Europe and the world." It was God who conquered. A great right Hand was stretched over the battle-field and He who could not be answered undertook the arbitrament of that day and a great man made way for a great age.

So in the Church. Who would have supposed before the light of the resurrection morning shone across the eastern sky that anything but complete ruin awaited the Gospel of the Nazarene? There seemed nothing to show, when the sun rose, but a handful of grave-clothes and a few faithful women. All the disciples had fled, but in the light of that resurrection morning, in the gleam of His face, who said, " I am the resurrection and the life," how the Church went forward. It will be well for her to remember that her glory is not in the golden vessels or splendid architecture, nor the help of the powerful and the rich. Once she could say to the paralytic, " Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. Rise up and walk." As of old, her glory is not in her walls or her superstructure of any sort, but in the fact that she is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and in the Master's life she must live and move and have her being.

We used to talk of our wealth in thousands; now we talk of it in millions. I know of three churches building which will probably cost not far from thirty millions. May it be whispered so that it will reach the high altar and the lowliest pew that the glory of the Church is not in architectural splendours, or lofty carols, but in the Shekinah which makes the sanctuary a Holy of Holies.

Many of you have seen Venice. As you drifted down the Grand Canal to the music of the guitar and felt the rhythmic swing of the gondolier as he pushed his glittering blade into the water and the sun lit up his sash, I hope you remembered how Venice came to be. Driven from their humble huts, pursued by their enemies, the fishermen turned to the sand bars of the Adriatic and laid the foundation for their new dwelling places. Little by little they fought back the sea. Tier upon tier, like coral insects, they rose on what others had built until they lifted themselves out of the sea. As you go there to-day you do not commiserate them upon their misfortune, but you glory in their matchless devotion. So God is building up His Church by the sacrifice and devotion of those who love her. Let her remember that her power lies not in the things which can be measured and weighed, but in the imponderables. There is a raindrop on a fern leaf where the fountain of the Father of Waters leaps in the sunlight. It will be calling each raindrop to its mate until at last a flood sweeps down to cover the land far and wide. There is a snowflake melting on a maiden's cheek, but when the snowflakes swarm—pale bees of the storm, the mountain shakes as the avalanche thunders down its sloping sides. Gravitation, which no man sees, holds the world in its grip and maintains all nature by its might. So in that matchless description of the imponderables which Paul sets forth in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, he tells us that the things which never fail are the things which no

man measures, but which all men may feel—faith and hope and love. If you want to see where verity is, if you want to feel those forces which make for righteousness, read the challenge to the churches of long ago. To proud Ephesus, the challenge comes, " Thou hast left thy first love. Repent or your doom is sealed." To Sardis, glorying in its shame, the Apostle cries, " I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead." To Laodicea, " I would thou were either hot or cold. But because you have no passion, no thrill of holy devotion, your light is out, and I will remove your candlestick out of its place."

What is true of the Church is true of the individual. What will make a man safe? What will fortify him against the evils which march with black and serried column against him in the day of trouble? Will you cry out, " I will fortify myself with all intellectual equipments, I will seek out all knowledge and all inventions, so I will increase in wisdom above all that were before me. I will get me great treasures and fill my barn with plenty. I will say, ' Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. I will make my attachments with the noble and powerful; I will buttress myself with the good opinions of my neighbours and will laugh at the enemy.' " All these things may be good enough in their way but they are human and not divine. The hands which have put up those battlements can take them down. They shall be leveled in the day when friends become enemies, when riches shall take to themselves wings and the plans of the wise miscarry and perish. But the soul which is impregnable has no walls at all. It looks defenseless and many a man has gone against it to make quick work of its overthrow, but he has found what Browning's *Tyrant* found:

> *" So I soberly laid my last plan*
> *To extinguish the man.*
> *When sudden—How think ye, the end?*

Did I say without friend?
Say rather from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the Sun's self for visible boss
While an Arm ran across,
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe pressed.
Do you see? Just my vengence complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed
—So I was afraid.''

So the promise of God is fulfilled. " I will be with thee a wall of fire round about thee and a glory in the midst." Somehow there is a feeling in human hearts too deep to be smothered by the dust of years, that the thing in which God has no hand will fail, that except God sustain the structure, they labour in vain who build. Have you gone out in confidence and found that your poor walls had tumbled down? And have you enacted the folly of so many who have preceded you, and blamed God? The fact is that you knew they would not last when you put them up. The best thing God can do for us is to show us that the intuition of the soul as old as time " If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," is a true one; that the proudest walls are useless if they are reared to take the place of God.

The fact is, God must be reckoned with by the nation and by the individual. Do not narrow your defenses to your own impotence. Let God become your Defender. If Jerusalem tries the methods of Babylon and Nineveh, she will fail. If the Christian tries the methods of the world, he will meet absolute overthrow. God will leave him to himself, and that is ruin enough for any soul. Whatever you do, do it with God in sight. A stone wall may be overthrown or surmounted, but what will you do with a wall of fire?

Long ago James Russell Lowell said in his *Bigelow Papers,* " You have got to get up early if you are going to take in

God." In this materialistic age, speak to that young man with his little foot rule and tell him that the things which are seen are temporal and that the things which are unseen are eternal. Speak to that old man, stolid amid human experiences, and tell him if he will have it so the forces which are for him are more than all that can be against him.

> *" God moves in all things*
> *All obey His swift propulsion from the night.*
> *Wake thou and watch*
> *The world is gray with morning light."*

What time I am afraid, I will trust—not in armies—but in the Living God, and I will say in the flood of great waters and in the shadow of the last valley, " The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." I see the New Jerusalem. It will not be built in Palestine. Strange that any one should have gone out with his tape measure to set the bounds for it on Judæa's rocks! It will not be set up with banners, nor armies, nor cannon, nor armadas. It will not be defended with walls of stone or bars of steel. The New Jerusalem is descended from God out of heaven. It will have one law of citizenship, and that the law of love; it will have one Defender, and that the Almighty God. May we find ourselves, at the last, citizens of the New Jerusalem, " whose walls are salvation and whose gates are praise " !

V

THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.—I TIM. 3: 16.

WE are all questioners and life itself is an interrogation point. We will not be troubled by that for mystery is God's allurement along the path of knowledge. You will recall how Oliver Wendell Holmes, the genial author of *Over the Teacups,* undertakes to describe the here and the hereafter in the shortest possible compass. When this declaration is brought forth from the teacup, one is surprised to see on the page a horizontal line with an interrogation point below it and an exclamation point above it. This in substance is the interpretation: Two worlds separated by the thinnest of partitions, the lower world a world of questions, the upper world a world of affirmation. Endless doubt and unrest below, admiring adoring certainty above. What that upper world may reveal to us we are not yet fully apprised, but we know that in the life of the world that now is, we are surrounded with mystery. There are mysteries of matter and mysteries of force. We have been fretting away at the borders of the unknown so long that one would think by this time there was little more to be known. But Edison tells us that no man living knows whether electricity is a liquid or a gas or a solid. He goes farther and says that no man knows one seven-millionth part of one per cent of anything. So if

you thought we were nearing the end of our learning, you have another guess coming.

A great scientist says that it would take a man 250,000 years to count the atoms in a pin's head, and that they revolve around each other with laws as fixed and in space relatively as great as do the planets themselves. Measured by the things we long to learn, the world never knew so little as it does to-day. The horizon is infinitely extended and we have hitherto but picked up a few pebbles on the beach.

Mysterious as are the forces of nature, there are greater forces still. After traversing all these natural forces, we take up the mightiest of powers—that of the spirit. Einstein tells us there is no longer a material mass, there is nothing but energy in the external universe. A strange and almost spiritual turn for modern physics to take. So it seems that matter does not exist apart, but only matter braced by force. Past all other mysteries of the spirit we come to the mystery of godliness. It is a great mystery how mind and matter were ever harnessed together; that I shall drop this mortal as a garment, that all these channels for light and life shall be worn out and fall into desuetude and yet I shall not die. It is a wonder that the food from my table is changed into chyme and chyle blood and muscle to stop the rents which time makes in this mortal fabric. How does it happen that food is changed to thought? How is it that a pound of beefsteak eaten in a poet's home in Cambridge becomes *A Psalm of Life,* or a dish of sauerkraut a chapter of *Faust,* or a *Hallelujah Chorus,* and a bowl of oatmeal eaten by a lowlander in a cotter's home becomes a *Hymn to Mary in Heaven,* or a song to a " wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower " ? Yet even this sinks out of sight before a greater mystery—" God manifest in the flesh." The flesh over which we have stumbled into grievous sin, the same flesh which was the dwelling place of a

Nero and a Herod. It was into a tabernacle built of the same dust that there came the Incarnate Word. Of that Incarnation my text declares He was justified in the Spirit. Whatever else that may mean, it means that the flesh had no more power over the soul; that He walked among raging passions and there was no smell of fire on His garments; that He went where lust breeds its pestilence and kept Himself purer than a lily on the breast of a turbid stream and it thrills me through and through to have Him say, that if I have Him with me I, too, may preserve myself unspotted from the world.

The poetic verse of my text advances: " Seen of angels." Not the spirits of just men made perfect, but those high and holy spirits forever attendant upon a just and holy God. They consorted with Him from the beginning and knew of His ministry. When His ship first touched the shore at Bethlehem, it was they who stepped ashore. They sang to a bewildered world, " Peace on earth, good will to men." They watched Him in the wilderness; they wept with Him in the garden; they kept guard at His tomb and they convoyed Him when He sailed home.

This Book represents angels as talking with men. They sat at the door of Abraham's tent in the cool of the day. I have no doubt that men are better now than they used to be, and certainly we have greater comforts; but I should be sorry to believe that, while folks may be better, the angels come no more.

" Preached unto Gentiles " affirms my text. That was a mystery in Jesus' time, but we are coming to understand that no man, no church, no nation, has a monopoly of the love of God. The Bible is not a good book on which to found racial narrowness. When John saw the New Jerusalem, it had twelve gates and they faced every quarter of the globe. If that means anything, it means that every

nation lies within reach of the heavenly portals. "On the north three gates," that means that every last Laplander shall have a chance; "On the east three gates," that means that the dwellers under the palm-tree and the fig-tree shall come to see Him who is the truth; "On the south three gates," that means that the dusky faced denizens of the tropics shall bring at last their caravans to the city of the great King; "On the west three gates," that means that the bright, consummate flower of the ages, the wealth and wisdom of the world, shall come at last to say, "We have seen His star and have come to worship Him."

If the Bible is a bad book for racial narrowness, it is also a bad book for ecclesiastical narrowness. There are some people who think that there is but one gate to heaven and they have the key, but they are mistaken. Of course the orthodox will have a gate but the heterodox may have one too. What is orthodoxy but my "doxy," and heterodoxy the other man's "doxy"? It might be that some follower of Gautama, the Light of Asia, might, in his heart, worship Him who is the Light of the World. There shall be a gate for him. Of course our Jewish friends must have a gate for heaven would be lonely without Abraham and Moses and Elijah and David and Isaiah. Our Roman Catholic friends must have a gate, for what saints have lifted their light to the world in that fellowship—Augustine and Chrysostom and Athanasius and Clement of Alexandria, and Francis of Assisi and thousands more. There shall be a gate for the church of Luther, of Knox, of Bunyan, of George Fox. Our Episcopalian friends shall have a churchly gate; our Presbyterian friends shall have a stately gate; if there is in the New Jerusalem, as there was in the old Jerusalem, a river-gate, of course that will belong to the Baptists, and if I have left anybody out, they are welcome to come in at the twelfth gate—the straight and narrow gate, where I

am trying to get in myself. But one minute inside *any* gate, and nobody in all heaven will know or care at what gate you came in. Twelve gates, but one heaven thank God! And if we have got to live together forever in heaven, hadn't we better get well acquainted with one another down here?

I know the Church has groveled in the dust. I know she has inverted her torch and almost put out her light in the ashes of her undoing. But in any age, bad as the Church may have been, it was the holiest thing alive. There was no other agency that could dispute her moral supremacy, and her rejuvenation came not from without but from within. There were always a few names in Sardis that had not defiled their garments—there was always a saving remnant. Now, as ever, the sword of the Church's power may be beaten down and her arguments may be quenched in seas of doubt, but the fiery darts of her enemies splinter themselves to pieces, on the golden shield of a holy life.

" Received up into glory " is the thrilling declaration of my text. He is going up. How, I do not know. How much there is that we do not understand about the forces of that upper world. Its gravitations are beyond our little ken. This little world of ours feels the tug of a world hundreds of thousands of miles away. The moon harnesses our tides and drives them up and down our glistening sands. Other worlds come down to help us. What a sense we have ourselves of the tug and uplift of that upper world. It is the country of our kindred. We watched them with streaming eyes as they sailed away. Stately vessels loaded to the gunwales with golden grain; tiny shallops filled with laughter and flowers. And I think they must have sailed for the Heavenly Port, for they came not back to me! By day and by night we feel the tug of that upper world, and know that where our treasures are, there are our hearts also.

The mystery is growing clearer as I look into the face of Jesus Christ. I feel in Him there is infinite power if only I may be belted on. God is there and we are here, but, unaided, I know no more of Him than I know of the planet Jupiter. The player must sit at the organ, then I shall understand.

You who are familiar with literature will recall the interesting story of the Rosetta Stone, found in the delta of the Nile, in 1799. On it were three sets of writings—the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians, the demotic characters of the people, and the classic Greek. The stone contained a decree of the priests and set up in all the temples to the glory of Ptolemy, the saviour of Egypt. The message was the same in each language. Knowing the Greek and knowing that the same things were said in the other languages, scholars were able to unravel the mystery of the hieroglyphics; and with that simple stone as a starting-point, our scholars can translate the ancient hieroglyphics as easily as the classic Greek.

It is not otherwise in the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is written, " Who hath seen Me hath seen the Father." I can never accuse God of being hard with repentant sinners, for I saw Jesus write the record of a sinner in the sand and scratch it out. I can never accuse God of being unmindful of my humble state, for I saw Jesus with a towel about His loins, washing His disciples' feet. I can never accuse God of favouring the rich, at the cost of the poor, for when Jesus set up His temple of fame, He put on its chief pedestal a poor widow, with two mites in her hand. I can never accuse God of being careless of common people, for Jesus went to dine with publicans and sinners. I know that God does not forget His own, for Jesus showed me a father standing at the cross-roads, shading his eyes, watching for a bad boy to come home and when he came, saw to it

that the feast was made ready, that there was a robe in place of rags and that the feast did not begin until the prodigal was in his place, at the head of the table. It is this mystery which the world is straining its ears to hear—the glorious revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ. There is nothing to compare with it.

I do not suppose that many of you could go as far as Robert Buchanan goes in his poem, *Judas Iscariot*. He pictures the celebration of the Lord's Supper after the Crucifixion. His disciples are there and they hear a voice of lamentation outside the upper room, and they question who it may be. The poet answers:

" 'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stood black and sad and bare:
' I have wandered many days and nights
There is no light elsewhere.'

'Twas the wedding guests cried out within:
And their eyes were fierce and bright,
' Scourge the soul of Judas Iscariot
Away into the night.'

'Twas the Bridegroom stood in the open door
And beckoned, smiling sweet,
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stole in and fell at His feet.

' The Holy Supper is served within
And the many candles shine
And I have waited long for thee
Before I poured the wine.'

The supper wine is poured at last,
The lamps burn bright and fair,
Iscariot washes the Bridegroom's feet,
And dries them with his hair."

Now, don't turn to your neighbour and whisper, " This preacher thinks Judas Iscariot was saved." I don't know

anything about *that;* you know as much and as little as I do. What the Bible says about it, is not pleasant reading. But I am sending out this message with a yearning heart to thousands of people who have done infinitely worse than Judas Iscariot ever did, because they have sinned against greater light—they have crucified their Lord again and again, and put Him to an open shame. I am sending out this message with the hope and the faith that the mercy of God is great enough to reach and to save the least, the lost and the last.

You are spending your time and strength on the petty round of cares which will all speedily be finished. How much of it all will last on the human side? What is there at the physical end but a few planks from the joiner's hand in the windowless chamber of silence and death? And on these lips of ours, so avid of praise, there will rest at last but a puff of dust!

Only one thing, after all, is worth while. You remember how the poet sent his ventures to sea. They were great ships that he sent out, and they bore priceless cargoes, and he named them as he launched them " Hope " and " Joy " and " Love " and " Faith." But of all he launched so hopefully only one came back:

" For Joy was caught by Pirate Pain,
Hope ran upon a hidden reef,
And Love took fire and floundered fast
In 'whelming seas of grief.

Faith came at last, storm-tossed and torn,
But recompensed me all my loss;
For as a cargo, safe, she bore,
A Crown linked to a Cross."

When your anchor-chain shall rattle out in port, God grant that you may have on board the same cargo.

VI

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.—JOHN 10: 10.

ONE cannot take up a newspaper or go to a department store and not be impressed with the increased cost of living. But the high cost of living is really of little concern beside the high cost of life itself. By life, I mean, of course, the higher life, the life which is really the man, the life which Jesus came to bring after a more abundant fashion. Life evermore tends toward complexity. You can see it in every avenue of human existence.

Some of you live in the country and some of you who live in the city, were born there. You can remember when almost any one could have the satisfaction of being a good citizen. All he had to do was to attend to his own affairs and keep within the law. The farmer who carried on his farm well, the blacksmith who could shoe horses well, the merchant who kept good goods and was fairly honest when he sold them, were respected in the community. Going back to the little old churchyard you can find their slate head stones with honest words of eulogy cut thereon. But since that day life has become infinitely more complex and insistent. That old farmer never studied sociology; he never went to the nearest city to find in the slums some women or children he ought to take out to the farm and nourish and support; he never investigated the conditions of child labour; he never joined a society for the study of political

economy. He never knew anything of the hundred philanthropies which are pressed upon the attention of your modern citizen. To-day if a man is a good merchant, a good mechanic, a good teacher, or a good anything else, his bell is rung by a score during the week who want to know if he has joined this, or that, or the other social organization, this, that or the other club for citizenship, this or the other organization for the preservation and enlargement of the city parks, or if he has subscribed toward the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Near East Relief, or any one of the fifty-seven varieties of organizations for good and pressing causes.

We have come to what we call the awakening of the social conscience, and it all means that the simple life is as much a thing of the past in morals, as it is in social life and economics. If one defends himself by bringing up some of the old-fashioned virtues for which his ancestors stood, they will quote to him the passage: "This oughtest thou to do, and leave not the other undone." So many matters are pressing upon us that we are like a congested railroad-track. A dozen trains are claiming right of way and the question is which one ought to go on the main track and which one on the side-track, and progress, as somebody has said, seems to be a series of rear-end collisions—one train pushing another off the track.

Why is the conscience of the community, to-day, quite another thing from the conscience of a thousand years ago, or even a generation ago? The answer is, it is the conscience which Jesus Christ is developing, as He comes to bring the abundant life. One cannot take his little loaf of bread and go off into a corner and eat it alone; one cannot run his business as he wills, with only his own concerns at issue. We are coming to understand that no man liveth to himself,

that we are our brother's helper, as well as our brother's keeper.

Life takes on tremendous importance and solemnity and there is infinite challenge in it. We can see the change in the attitude of Christian people. The old farmer I knew as a boy, was a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist. He was well up on the Shorter Catechism or the Thirty-nine Articles and hoped he belonged to the elect. He paid his pew-rent and went to church with great regularity. He saw that the minister had wood in his backyard and hay in his barn; but only with rare exceptions did he enlarge his vision to take in a sin-sick world. Nearly all the great missionary societies came into birth around the middle of last century, and now the Church has advanced to feel that the whole world is its parish. The low ceiling of life has lifted until it reaches the vaulted sky and we can adopt with deeper significance than Oliver Wendell Holmes knew, the familiar passage—

" Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul
As the swift seasons roll.
Leave thy low vaulted past,
Let each new temple, nobler than the last
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

It is not enough to remind ourselves that life is more important and insistent; it is also more multiform and we are reminded that for that reason there must be a choice of values and we must put the first things first. We cannot go on one ceaseless round of business or pleasure or social function and call that life. It is true " 'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant." " More life and fuller," is the cry of the soul. Jesus came to introduce us to that life and to tell us that we must develop its highest functions.

May I use a simple and homely illustration? Here is a

man with a farm. He goes about its cultivation. Its rich fields laugh into abundant harvest as he tickles their furrows with his hoe. But some day a mining expert comes along and tells him that a little way beneath the soil, are great deposits of coal and that he may warm and light his home, his community and the state if he will sink down shafts and bring the black diamonds to the surface; and enrich himself a hundred times as much as he could from his surface-harvest. But, if we may presume the geologic strata would allow it, another geologist comes along and tells him that far below the coal are great veins of gold-bearing quartz and that one load of that would be worth a hundred loads of coal. This is a feeble illustration of that tripartite nature over which life presides. We have the physical, the intellectual, the spiritual.

These bodies of ours are our constant care. We spend more time in looking after them than in looking after our minds or our souls. But they are very important; they interfere with, or promote, every other activity. If the body is ill, the mind stagnates; if the sensual predominates, spiritual aspirations are laid low. But after all, these bodies of ours we can use only a little while. They are like tents which men set up for a little and strike them in the morning and move on. No matter how much attention we give them, the seed of death is in them. In spite of the apothecary's art the hair will grow gray, time with its graver will cut deep furrows in the brow, the grinders will cease because they are few, and those who look out of the window be darkened. We affirm the resurrection of the body—but what body? The Apostle is very careful to state that we shall not have the body which we lay down. It will be no more that body than the grain of wheat which is plucked is the same grain which was planted. If what the scientists tell us is true, the man of fifty has already had seven or eight bodies. Which one of them, or what kind of body we shall have, we

do not know. We do not find any record in the Bible that physical perfections or imperfections will be carried into the next world. The man with a lame body will not have to take it up again, and hobble down the golden streets. The man born blind, we love to think, will not have to grope his way in Paradise.

When I come to think of the intellectual life which has absorbed so much of my time in its development, I question how much of that I shall want to carry with me. Some of you have been students of the stars. With a transit instrument you have seen the stars sweep across your vision filling to a second their appointed time and place. The heavens have declared the glory of God, as the firmament has shown His handiwork. But when you shall see Him who hung the stars in their places, how much of all you have studied will be worth remembering? You have been a student of literature from the days when Attic poets sang, to the days of Shakespeare and Milton and Emerson and Carlyle. How much of it will be worth remembering when you hear Him who spoke as never man spake, and who will bring forth the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. You have studied social and political economy, but how much will those studies avail in a land where society is of a different sort and earthly politics have no place? I like to think that all the study of a lifetime may make me better prepared to appreciate the glories which shall be revealed by God, when I think His thoughts after Him. But so far as carrying hence the things which I have learned, they will be too crass, too far from the truth to be of use up there. The thing which thrills my soul and makes my breath come fast is that the only One who knows tells me that I must carry with me forever the spiritual values which I gain here! As there are no pockets in shrouds, so there will be no use for any of our earthly accumulations. The coins of earth

will not pass current over the counters of heaven. The only coin that will do me any good will be the coin of good deeds. The only thing that will enrich me forever is the treasure of the soul.

If our time is given up to the body, our care will perish with us. If we are only interested in human speculations without translating it into service, the greater the brain the greater our condemnation. But if we give ourselves to the spiritual values of life, there are rewards in that living beyond all calculations.

I meet men who profess to be greatly oppressed by differences in creed and dogma, and who say, " How shall we know what to believe? " I answer, " Jesus came to give *life* and to give it more abundantly." You are asking, " How shall I do all the things that He desires and that you say I ought to do? How shall I leave off this sin and that sin and the other, and take on this, that, and the other virtue, one after another? " Here is your answer: How does a tree care for a thousand leaves? Does it roll up its sleeves in the morning and say with a sigh in the springtime, " To-day I must start a thousand leaves." Does the tree by taking thought thereto add to its stature? No, the tree has life and it whispers its message to every rootlet in the dark, " Set your pumps going, draw in the nourishment out of the soil! " It whispers to every branch and twig, " Take in the sunlight and the dew and the rain! " And so some morning a thousand branches burst into life and bloom. How does a Christian grow? By leaving off one sin after another and taking on one virtue after another? No, by living a life. " The life which I now live I live by faith on the Son of God," and we may all say, " This *is* life *eternal,* to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." It is He who said, " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

All the questions which have disturbed you are settled when you feel the thrill of that new life and so have revealed in you that glorious certitude which Jesus came to bring. There is an old legend which declares that when Orpheus, sweetest of singers, was dead, that his lyre floated down the river to the Lesbian shore. There a fisherman found it. He took the sounding wood which had ravished the souls of men with its melodies, and broke it up to cook a meal of fish. He took the cords which had vibrated with celestial music and stripped them out to mend his nets. You have a harp of a thousand strings. If you wish you can tear it to pieces, or make the coarse, blatant jazz of the sensual and the base; or, if you will have it so, heavenly music may echo from every string, music that shall charm away temptation and help to lift the heart of every listener to the eternal harmonies. It is for you to say which it shall be. As God is saying, " You ought," why not answer, " I will " ?

VII

WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.—PSALM 119: 18.

MEASURED by its friends and enemies, by the criticisms it has received and the encomiums it has evoked, and by its popularity throughout the centuries and throughout the world, the Bible stands pre-eminent above all books ever written. Interesting as that question would be, I am not now concerned with the question of literary values as set forth by the higher criticism. While I am in hearty sympathy with all scholarly investigation of the Bible, I am making my appeal here, not to the higher criticism but to the *highest* criticism, namely to the vindication which the Bible has made for itself, in the nature of things, in the course of events and in the providence of God. My appeal, then, is to facts. As long as a matter is a matter of theory, one guess may be as good as another; but when a fact strides into view then every theory has to be adjusted to meet it. I hope you remember Huxley's famous definition of a tragedy—"A beautiful theory murdered by a gang of brutal facts."

I wish you would indulge me in the fiction that I am speaking, now, of a new book, one about which you are supposed to know nothing. In many cases that is not as big a fiction as I wish it were. First, the composition of the Book was most unique. Most books are written in one language and by one author and in a limited period. This book was written in at least two languages—the rugged

Hebrew and the classic Greek. One of the greatest students of the classics has said that Greek came forth from the dead with this Book in its hands. Where other books have one author, this has not far from fifty authors; other books were written in a year or a decade, this Book was not far from a thousand years in the making. Some of its pages were written in the desert, and some by the sobbing sea, some in a palace and some in a sheepfold and some floated out of a prison-window in the cramped handwriting of an old man who was a prisoner for conscience' sake.

We have had many translators of this book into English and, in some cases, the translation cost the translator his life. They would have killed Wyclif but he escaped martyrdom by a paralytic stroke. Thirty years after his death, the Council of Constans ordered his bones taken up and burned. Tyndale paid the price for his translation with his life. Both his translation and himself were sent to the flames. His historian naively says, " They were exceedingly kind to him for, instead of burning him, they only strangled him and burned his body at the stake."

The popularity of a book is supposed to be indicated by its circulation. The circulation of any other book in the history of the world is infinitesimal in comparison with the circulation of this Book. Let me give you some figures which perhaps you will be glad to put down. I am indebted for them to the American Bible Society, and this is the very latest authorized statement of its circulation. Last year there were issued by the three great Bible Societies—The American Bible Society, The British and Foreign Bible Society and The National Bible Society of Scotland—26,566,472 Bibles and portions thereof. When you add to this the product of commercial publishers of the Bible, you have at least a round thirty-six millions of volumes this last year. The product of the three Societies, up to 1929, was 694,537,-

655. If we may add to this ten per cent for the product of other publishers, which is far too low, we would have more than seven hundred and fifty millions of volumes. The whole Bible, or some part of it, has been translated into eight hundred eighty-six languages and dialects, and is being put into new languages at the rate of one in every five weeks. The combined circulation of a score of the world's greatest classics would not begin to touch the hem of the garment of that circulation. So you see when you are saying that the Bible is the most popular book in the world, you are well within the facts of the case.

The greatest sensation that ever happened in book circulation was in connection with this volume. When a revision of it was ready for distribution nearly half a century ago, the streets of New York City were blocked with express wagons rushing it to train and steamer that it might be sent to the uttermost parts of the earth. The longest message, so far as I know, ever sent by telegraph in the history of the world, was not a message of King to Parliament, or President to Congress, but a part of this Book, Matthew to Romans, inclusive—one hundred eighteen thousand words—which were telegraphed from New York to Chicago (before the days of the telephone) in order that they might reach that city in time to be inserted in a Sunday newspaper. That was a very religious thing for Chicago to do.

Many misunderstand the Bible because they do not fathom its real purpose. In a secular book, the first thing you do is to read the preface, so that you may know the purpose of its author. The Bible has a preface, and John wrote it: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." A great many criticize the Bible as if it were a work on secular history, or geology,

or biology. We do well to remind ourselves that it would not be fair to criticize a drama as if it were a work on history or geology.

I would like to call your attention here to the marvelous things which the Bible contains. They are unmatched anywhere in literature, but space will not permit any but a passing reference. Is it not thrilling to think that the most popular poem in the world to-day, more quoted than any other, was not written by Homer or Shakespeare, or Browning, but by a Hebrew youth, perhaps in a sheepfold. The greatest poem of the ages begins, " The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." When they wanted the finest sentence ever written as an epitome of the relation of religion to the thoughts of men, they asked the president of our oldest university to ransack all literature of all the ages to find that best sentence. He found it in the Bible. It was written by a young man named Micah. It has persisted for millenniums and will last till the stars grow weary with their shining: " He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? "

If you are fond of a love-story, you ought to read your Bible, for that is the love-story of God. In these brief paragraphs I want to call your attention, especially, to the pragmatic test—to the vindication which the Bible makes for itself in the nature of things and in the course of human events. Prof. William Lyon Phelps says of it, " It ought to have written on the cover, ' Highly explosive. Handle with care.' " It is the book which by the dynamite of its message has lifted empires off their hinges and turned the course of human events. It has put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted them of low degree. It has overwhelmed nations and institutions whose sins cried out to God and has overwhelmed evil-doers when they thought to hail

the hour of their triumph. It has struck the simple solemn with its inherent power. It has brought to naught the counsel of evil men. The great masterpieces of art and music and literature caught their inspiration from this Book. It was the message from this Book, " The just shall live by faith," which transformed the face of Germany and the world through the kindled heart of one man. It was this book which fired the heart of John Wesley on a never-to-be-forgotten night in May 1738, and through him changed the face of England, so that Lecky, the historian, writes, " What happened to John Wesley that night, was of greater consequence to England, than all the victories of Pitt by land or sea."

Why is it that for centuries in the courts of justice as a preventive against perjury and graft, the world has asked the witness to lay his hand on this Book and promise on its stately authority that he will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Why is it that the Presidents of the United States, as the supreme evidence of their devotion to the great task which they have assumed, have laid their hands on this Book and promised by its strength to be true to their obligation?

I never open the Book but that a hush of solemn awe fills my soul. Every page has (to those who know the facts) the thrilling story of the martyrs who refreshed their souls when they were like to faint and who cooled their hot lips in a draught of its life-giving waters; who found solace in the midst of all crosses and losses and who took the Book with them as a talisman to the scaffold and the stake. Once more I hear, in the far-carrying tones, the triumphs of the Covenanters in Scotland's " killing time." It was in this fountain of grace that they found strength for every need. It is James Guthrie, " the short man who could not bow," who is going to his death. " My conscience I cannot submit! " he

says. In those five words we have the *Iliad* of the martyrs in a nutshell. When the day of Guthrie's coronation was come, this Book lay open before him. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," he said, "let us be glad and rejoice in it." It is the Earl of Argyll who is climbing the steps of the scaffold. To his friends he said, "I could die like a Roman, but I choose rather to die like a Christian." He had bathed his soul in the spirit of his Book. It was the bread of life that held him up. Like a courteous gentleman he went forward to the glittering blade, and kneeling down he prayed in silence. Then he lifted his hand as a signal and the axe descended and Campbell of Argyll was with his Lord!

When you go to Wittemberg, go into the old castle church, and as you come to it lay your ear against the door and you can hear the echo of the hammer where on that same door Martin Luther nailed his famous theses, as he sounded the battle-cry of the Reformation. Go inside and not far from a double grave where Luther and Melancthon lie you will see the passage which sustained them, "If God be for us who can be against us."

Our own Woodrow Wilson lies dying. This Book is open before him, and he is undergirded by the Twenty-third Psalm, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

May I now consider a more personal reason why I bring this Book to your attention? It is the message of God to the human soul. Who am I, what am I, whence came I, and what is my future? All these questions are answered here. No other book ever claimed, in the same sense, to be planned in heaven and written on earth. Here and here alone is to be found the answers to those questions which most disturb the mind and heart of men, and behind those

answers lie millions of affirmative human experiences. May I remind you, too, that this Book is fragrant with holy personal memories. It has behind it, not only a long and thrilling history in the passing of the centuries, but it has a more intimate testimony from the lips of those who loved you best and were most deeply interested in you. If you have an old family Bible, take it down. I hope that that Book lay upon the stand in the living-room and was opened at morning devotion in your early life. I hope that those who are dear to you, read it in life's twilight, as they had read it when they hung the fire-crane and set up the family altar on their wedding day. Those whom you have loved found strength there for the day of their toil, and when they walked in God's Acre they read the promises which it contained and were comforted. Those who are dear to you ventured their all upon the solemn affirmations of this Book, and when, at last, they set out on their voyage over that sea which we all must sail, and faced that unseen land toward which all men hasten, they took with them as their chart and compass this blessed Book. When life's pulses were growing fainter they found here a strength divine, and in the end, they pillowed their heads upon its sacred promises and went hence with holy joy. Death passing that way left upon their faces the smile it dared not steal—the happy look of a voyageur who had come full-cargoed into port.

When you remember who inspired the Book and who wrote it; when you recall those who have been sustained by it; when you remember the vindication which the ages have given it; whenever you open this greatest of Books, do it with a prayer and let these be the words of your supplication, " Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

VIII

RELIGION IN THE HOME

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.—DEUT. 6: 6–9.

I WAS born in Puritan New England, where our fathers used to bound the day, " on the east by supplication and on the west by thanksgiving." I was born in a Christian home where the voice of prayer was welcomed as a dear and sacred thing. There is a notion that the Sabbath was a dull and gloomy day in old New England, but that depended upon the attitude of the individual. My recollection of the Sabbath is quite otherwise. Across the years I hear the mellow tones of the old bell, high up in the steeple as it called the country folk to worship. Sunday was a day when a clean body and a clean soul kept happy company. I see the old preacher as he walks up the aisle of God's house with white neckcloth and whiter hair, to his place under the high sounding board. I hear him talk once more, like a father to his children, and see in his face the solicitude which we could never quite evade. It was not so bad after the long service was over to lie on the hillside amid the scent of the clover and to watch the fleecy clouds, as God drove them like white flocks in azure pastures, and to count the swallows as they flew on quick wing to their nests under the eaves or to their homes in the chimney-tops.

We did not have the highly-seasoned sports and the social tabasco that the present generation enjoys. Our enjoyments, some of them, were of a sober sort. My father would say, "If you are a good boy this week, next Sunday afternoon I will take you down to the graveyard." That would not seem to be a very alluring outdoor sport for the youth of to-day, but to walk down the grassy aisles of God's Acre, holding the hand of the best man in the world and hearing him speak of what life really was, was not so bad after all. Stopping by an old slate headstone, he would turn to me and say, "The man whose dust is sleeping there was all wool and a yard wide. He walked in humble ways but he feared God. His neighbours came to know him as one who was seeking to help men to the better life. Though his dust has long been sleeping here, his memory is as ointment poured forth." A little further down the grassy aisle we halted, one day, by a new-made grave. "There is a prodigal sleeping there," he said. "Like the ancient prodigal he asked of his father the portion of goods that fell to him: his father was as foolish as the other prodigal's father, and let him have it. He went to the city and spent it in riotous living. When it was spent and he began to be in want, he came back home and asked his father to put a mortgage on the farm so that he might have money enough to keep him out of jail. He got the money but it went the same way the other had gone, and at last they brought him back and laid his dust in a dishonoured grave. His mother sleeps on one side of him, his father on the other—both in the grave of the broken-hearted."

I have forgotten many of the sermons I have heard preached, including some of my own: but I never forgot those which were preached to me as we walked down the grassy paths of God's Acre. I like it so much that when my boys came on, I did the same thing with them. Only

last summer, as I prepared on Saturday to go to the city to preach, my son said to me, " Don't go. Stay at home and take us to the graveyard."

I knew an old deacon who had two prayers. I knew them just as well as he did and could tell which one was coming after the first sentence. In one of them he would say, " Oh Lord, grant that our homes may be like the house of Obed-Edom, where the ark rested." It was in the house of Obed-Edom that I first saw the light. My father was a local preacher and class-leader. Anxious and meditative, interested in everything that concerned the community, he used to worry a good deal, but he lived to be ninety-two. I think one reason he lived so long was because he had Mother, and Mother had a sweet and quiet faith. They tell me she was beautiful once; that her brown hair thrust its wilful curls low on her forehead in spite of comb and band; that her eyes were like seas where summers lie dreaming. The damask of the rose was in her cheeks and the glint of her teeth of pearl made laughter sweet. Her throat was fair to see, and in all the country round about, no hand was so white and shapely as hers. But of that I never knew, for when I came to know her and to put her on her throne, her eyes had lost their lustre through scalding tears. There was a far-away look in them, as of those who watch for ships at sea. The damask had faded out of her cheeks and the graver of Time had cut deep furrows there. Her beautiful full-veined hands had begun to tremble, but I bear her witness that she never soiled the ermine robe which my baby hands threw over her queenly shoulders. Her dust has long been sleeping beneath the daisies, but I rise up now to call her blessed, as your children will do for you, if you do for them what she did for me.

In such a home as that, you would expect a family altar. My father had the old-fashioned way of praying for each

member of the family by name, and he gave the Lord a great deal of needless information concerning each one of us. He told Him at what point we were especially susceptible, and urged Him to look out for us at just that point. And, incidentally, while he was telling this to God, we, his children, overheard him, and, in later years, never ceased to be grateful.

" The House of Obed-Edom where the ark rested! " It makes all the difference in the world whether the ark comes to the house as a sacrament or a ceremony, whether love or necessity throws open the door. The ark of ancient Israel had rested in the house of Abinadab for twenty years, and nothing worth mentioning had happened. But before it had been in the house of Obed-Edom three months, the message came to King David that " the Lord has prospered the House of Obed-Edom and all that pertained unto it because of the ark of God." Abinadab and Obed-Edom were evidently not the same kind of men, and so the ark had a different reception in each house.

The Sabbath may be observed by law or by love. The children may be forced to go to church and hate the day and the service. On the other hand, a loving devotion in the home may sanctify the day so that until the last pulse beat the Sabbath will be to those children

> *" Day of all the week the best,*
> *Emblem of eternal rest."*

In one home the Bible may be read as an ancient document to be criticized or ridiculed. It might better never be opened. In another, it is opened with reverence, read with delight and treasured in an honest heart. If one is not minded to know and love the truth, he will never find it. Jesus said, " If any man will do My will, he shall know of the doctrine." Ingersoll read the same Bible that Lincoln

read. One prostrated himself on his face before it in the White House; the other strove to hold it up to ridicule. One scoffed, the other prayed.

In the days of Obed-Edom only one house could have the Sacred Ark. Now, every home may have what the Ark stood for—worship and devotion. I make my plea for a family-altar in every Christian home. You cannot expect to have a Christian nation unless you have Christian homes. How can God's cause prosper when His altars are broken down? Set up the family-altar by the nursery-door. Let the children hear of, and come to love Him who, in the long ago, held little children, as the sweet Greek has it, " in the crook of His arm," and said, " of such is the kingdom of heaven." Look after the children for the enemy of their soul is hot-footed on their track. It is far easier to save the child than to rescue the prodigal, and for the prodigal, alas, there are the bitter memories of the husks and the swine and the ruined hopes of broken hearts. It is better to put an altar at the top of the cliff than to dig a dishonoured grave at the bottom.

As a pastor, I have been often met with the statement, " It is impossible to have family prayers in a city home amid the pressure of social and business life." To that I answer, we can do anything that ought to be done. If it could not be done then there is no obligation to do it. Do you say, " I am off to business early, the children come down later, we cannot get together " ? Well, I suppose you are together once a week—that would be a good time for family prayers, and if it should happen that there are a few minutes when you are together each day, how opportune it would be to supplicate God's help in the midst of life's dangers. If the children do not go into the vast temptations of life surrounded by the aroma of God's presence, can you wonder if they fall? Does anybody think he makes any-

thing when he takes a few minutes away from prayer and communion with God? Martin Luther said long ago, "Prayer and provender hinder no man in his journey." Daniel in Babylon, Prime Minister of the realm, found time to pray, and so did Gladstone, Prime Minister of England, and so did Chinese Gordon, the greatest general England ever knew. The man who for fifty years has represented more money than any man in the world has found time for family prayers morning and evening, and his son likes it so well that he has kept it up. I know a merchant prince whose house has been like the house of Obed-Edom for the ark has rested there, and God's blessings have been multiplied thereby. Three of his sons have gone into the ministry, and the other three are equally devoted to the things that are most worth while, and in business circles they are setting the same gracious example that their brothers use in the ministry. For a generation the father and mother gave a half hour each morning to the study of God's word, to the sweet songs of the church and to fellowship with God, and each one of the children was committed to the gracious watch-care of the Heavenly Father.

In his *Cotter's Saturday Night,* Robert Burns draws a picture of the family-altar that might well be hung in every home in our time. The priest-like father reads the sacred page:

"Then, kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together humming their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere."

What wonder that the poet should add

" From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad;
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
' An honest man's the noblest work of God! ' "

After almost three millenniums we are repeating a name which otherwise had been buried and forgotten. Nobody cares about the plan or size of the house of Obed-Edom, whether the painter had done his finest work or the rooms had only the fresco of the smoke of the years, and nobody cares how much the house cost, or who built it. One fact rises out of the dust of its timbers and will be remembered as long as stars shine and rivers run—it held the Ark of God and for that reason God blessed the house of Obed-Edom.

IX

THE HAZARD OF FAITH

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.—DANIEL 3: 18.

THE Book of Daniel grips the soul and has nerved unnumbered martyrs in lions' dens and fiery furnaces so that they have not flinched. The form of the Fourth has steadied them against the hot breath of the flame and because of them many a man has been forced to say with Nebuchadnezzar: "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort." This victory of the seen has been marvelous in its power to quicken the faith of men, but I wish to present another side of human experience which we will call, if you please, *The Hazard of Faith.* What a magnificent answer that was to the hot and thunderous demand of the king! Looking into the glow of the waiting furnace where others had been cremated before them, these men answered the autocratic monarch, "We are not concerned to plead for your favour. If things turn out as you say, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." The only question was, what is God's plan in the matter? If He willed it, He was able to save the men from this physical suffering and death and would do it. It was not a question of His ability, but of wisdom and of plan. And then occur the words which Dean Farrar used to say were among the most sublime in all Scripture, "But if not ——"

They present the truth that the man who trusts in God will continue to say to the end, " Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It has been the glorious achievement of men to have attained, by the inspiration of the will of the Almighty, so clear an insight into the truth, that the voice of duty must be obeyed to the very end and at any cost that it has led them to defy any combination of opposing forces.

Wherever there is left in man any true manhood, he has never shrunk from accepting death rather than the disgrace of compliance with what he despises and abhors. It is this which has sent our soldiers in every age, in every nation, on a forlorn hope, and made them march with a smile upon " the batteries which vomited their cross-fire upon them." It is by virtue of this that all the martyrs, with the irresistible might of their weakness, have shaken the solid earth.

It is King Nebuchadnezzar who speaks in Babylon, but it is King Custom or Self-interest, or Prejudice, or Folly that speaks in your city and mine, and the language is one and the same. "At what time you hear the music, fall down and worship and it shall be well." " Will you do that, young man? " " I suppose so; other people do. I shall lose my place. I shall be poor. I shall be left behind in the race. No office and no emolument will be mine unless I do. I will worship your image, O king." Another pair of hands shackled, another light snuffed out, another possible martyr gone over to the safe crowd. Cross his name off! He has sold himself out for ease or for pelf. His pedestal is empty. Chant for him, as Browning chants in his *Lost Leader:*

> *" Just for a handful of silver he left us,*
> *Just for a riband to stick in his coat."*

You read of the young man who refuses to lie about the goods he is compelled to sell and is discharged by his em-

ployer. He is hired by another man, who hears of his integrity and pays him a large increase in salary, and so is advanced in pay and place by telling the truth. In that case honesty was certainly the best policy; but here is the hazard I am putting to you: If he will deliver, well; but if not—what then? Are you ready to join the goodly company of martyrs? If the curtain rings down not on three men unscathed in the midst of the flames, not on three new princes in Babylon, but on an urn full of ashes, what then?

" What if you're done to the death, what then?
If you've done the best that you could,
If you played your part in the world of men,
The great Critic will call it good.

" Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,
His step may be slow or spry;
It's not the fact that you're dead that counts,
It's only, How did you die? "

What we need to be able to say and do is this: though there may be more men go to the scaffold and the stake than escape them; though there be more eaten of the lions than there be delivered from their jaws; though there may be more poor for Christ's sake than rich in worldly goods because of Him—nevertheless " we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Look over the history of the world and you will find that God has not always seen fit to deliver His followers out of bodily harm. The prophet Jeremiah, in spite of all his deliverances and his heroism, was sawn asunder. Herod heard only the music of the dancers, but John the Baptist heard the grate of the iron hinges as his prison door opened to admit his executioners. Peter, the bold in spirit, was overmatched physically by his enemies and died on the cross. There was a flash of a Roman sword outside the gates of

the Eternal City and Paul's head fell into the basket. The story of the Church Fathers is a story of the sword and the lions and the fagots. Savonarola, and Huss, and Latimer, and Ridley rode up to the gates of heaven in chariots of fire. Bunyan is "had home to prison," and Sidney and Russell are haled to the block, and many a saint went to God with the "Tyburn Tippet" around his neck.

"The chambers of the great are jails
And head winds right for royal sails."

If, once in a while, God permits a man to go early to his grave in order that He may make him and his cause immortal, do not think for that reason that either God or man is defeated. What is true of the great names the world will never allow to perish, is also true of humble men and women. We have prayed to be delivered from pain and we have gone into prayer-meeting and have testified, "I have had a great answer to prayer. God has defeated the evils that encompassed me and I have been restored again to health." But what of those saints who will come to prayer-meeting never again, who will never know another well hour until the Angel of Death shall kiss them into perpetual health? What of those who feel the fiery furnace grow hotter day by day and see the mortal tenement damaged beyond all power to heal? Is the form of the Fourth only in furnaces where Nebuchadnezzar puts out the fire? Was Stephen less a victor than those who walked unscathed from the fiery ordeal? Who really was the victor—the martyrs or Nero, his judges or Socrates, Pilate or Christ? Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and you will have your answer.

It seems only yesterday that our boys were in the carnage of the Argonne. A mother rose in prayer-meeting and said, "I prayed for my boy. God answered my prayer and I have just heard that he is safe." But across the aisle sat

a gold-starred mother. She had prayed for her boy, but he had chanted as he went to battle,

" I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade."
* * * * *
" And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous."

Did God fail to answer that mother's prayer? Was her boy any less precious in His sight than the one whose life was spared? A saved world cries to the gold-starred mother, " Tears and palms! "

Wealth and public honour come to some because they walk in the path of righteousness, but they do not come to all who walk that path. I know some men who had a chance to be rich and to be powerful, but who gave it up in order to save their soul alive, and they never had a second chance. You and I know enough of human life to know that not every Job gets out of his poverty and ashes. I have known men who died with the potsherd still in their hands. If I am to face life as it is, I must have something to recommend beside a devotion to God which is given for earthly cause. " Doth Job serve God for naught," was the Devil's taunt in the days of the patriarch's prosperity, but there came a time when that taunt trailed off into silence.

Here is the sublime attitude for a true servant of God, who will not succumb to temptation or to earthly defeat. " If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Browning, in *Paracelsus* cries:

" I go to prove my soul.
I see my way, as birds their trackless way
I shall arrive, what time, what circuit, first
I ask not, but, unless God send His hail

Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive!
He guides me and the birds—in His good time."

Let me have a word now with our young men and women in camp or home or field. Long ago, speaking to the boys of New York's East Side, Roosevelt said, "Don't flinch, don't foul, hit the line hard." On a tablet at Coney Island they have carved his words—"Aggressive fighting for the right is the greatest sport the world affords." You cannot always win on the football field or the baseball diamond.

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

Anywhere, any time you can play the game and play it according to the laws of the game, let the result be what it may. Arnold of Rugby was the greatest schoolmaster England ever had. He influenced two generations of his countrymen in whom he sought to develop splendid manhood. A great poet has told how his training eventuated when those boys became captains, generals and leaders in the great contest of life:

"The sand of the desert is sodden red—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke—
The gatlin's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and honour a name;
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks—
'Play up! play up! and play the game.'"

I know the temptations of to-day. My knowledge of the youth of our time makes me realize that they are of the same timber as the rest of us, and have the same temptations which their fathers knew and probably face them about as well.

" Good ye are and bad, and like to coins
Some true, some light,
But every one of you stamped
With the image of the King."

Don't mar it. It is in that image that you have your value. When the great test comes stand true. Life is a great adventure. Whatever you do, be true to God and duty. If you have a mind to make a new covenant for a more noble service, make it now. Do you remember this, from Browning's *Paracelsus?*

" Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal,
Two points in the adventure of the diver,
One—when a beggar he prepares to plunge,
One—when a prince, he rises with his pearl?
Festus, I plunge! "

And Festus says, *" We wait you when you rise."* Years ago I quoted that passage at a great conference of picked men of Harvard, Yale, Princeton and the other Eastern universities. " The world awaits you," I said, " when you rise;—will you plunge? "—and a score of those men said, " I plunge! " I would that you might do the same.

In the heavenly halls of fame, John saw a splendid company and one of the elders who stood round about asked, " What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they? " And the answer was, " These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

I have a growing conviction that we need not expend our sympathy on men who are going by the short cut of tribulation to meet supernal triumph. I urge you, young men and women, be true to duty as God gives you to see it, no matter what the cost.

X

THE TABLE-TALK OF JESUS

"Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house."—LUKE 7: 37.

THE table-talk of great men is always fascinating. It is supposed to be the measure of a man when, among his friends, he can speak unhindered by fear of misunderstanding or lack of appreciation. It is years since I read *The Table-Talk of Martin Luther;* from it I gained a new idea of the great throbbing heart and the human interest of the great leader of the Reformation. The master retailer of table-talk is James Boswell. It is Boswell who gave Samuel Johnson to the world. At times, one hardly knows whom to admire the most—the stern old philosopher, or the faithful scribe, who sets apples of gold in pictures of silver. We like to know what great men thought it worth while to talk about, to their friends,—what were the values they held to be supreme. When there was no reason to trim one's sails to social, political or ecclesiastical trade winds, how did they sail their crafts?

I am sure the world is agreed that of all the table-talk which has been caught by devout disciples from the lips of their masters and passed on to listening and admiring multitudes none is so full of meaning, or read with such rapt attention, as that which fell from the lips of Him who spoke as never man spake. We have some of His words reported to us by His friends. How we long for the thousands that must have dropped by the wayside, or

at the morning or evening meal! What a sweet hyperbole is that of John, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written." If the world, to-day, could find some new word which He spoke to His disciples, its presses would run night and day until every last citizen had another message from His lips. Parables like those which now gladden the world must have fallen without stint from His blessed lips. A few of them have been preserved for us and make us rich indeed.

Jesus was a famous diner-out. His enemies charged, that while John came as an ascetic, Jesus was " a glutton and a wine-bibber." You do not think of it in that fashion, but close examination will impress one with the humour of Jesus. Who can read His parables—if he read with discrimination—without a smile? And, then, how intense He was! " If your eye offend you, pluck it out," He says. " If your hand offend you, cut it off." " Go drown yourself rather than say a word that shall offend one of these little ones." And what paradoxes were His! " He that would save his life shall lose it. He that would lose his life shall save it." It was His heart that was thrilling in all His table-talk. It was the love of His soul, the zeal that was burning and fairly consuming Him, that manifests itself here. His whole life could be epitomized in a single sentence: " He had a passion for saving the lost."

Whether He talked with Pharisee, or Sadducee, or publican, or sinner, in public or in private, before the interviews were over, Jesus had told them, in some form, the one glorious fact that was epitomized in Him—" I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." The table-talk of Jesus is such talk as a father might give with his arm around the neck of a thought-

less or a sinning child. This was what He meant when He said, "Whoso hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

It was after a busy day that Jesus had an engagement to dine with Simon, the Pharisee. That dinner has been heard of throughout the world, not because of the palace in which it was served, nor because of the courses which crowded the table, but simply because of one broken-hearted woman—a sinner—who intruded herself upon the feast. It would appear as though she had met Him before, and had already some cause for gratitude. Can you not picture her—you, who have seen her like in the great cities? Can you not understand why she came there? Can you not see pictures of the days of innocence, which floated before her eyes—maybe of a home of prayer; of an anxious father and mother from whom she had turned; of promises made to them which she had broken, and of promises made to *her* which had been broken? And so the poor girl with riven heart and shattered life steals in to the house of Simon the Pharisee. Whether she had told Jesus her story before or not, we do not know. Whether she had heard those wonderful stories of the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost boy, we cannot tell; but at any rate, in some way, hope stirs in her heart and a changed life stretches before her, pointed out by the tender love of the Man who sits there at the feast. Her attitude is not one of importunity, it is rather one of passionate gratitude for something already granted her. Maybe she is just leaving Capernaum to go back to her mother and begin a new life, and this is her last chance of showing her love. You picture the scene—the guests reclining on couches around the board, their feet resting on cushions, and then this poor woman throwing herself with passionate sobbing at the feet of the Master. The veil is off her face and the fastenings from her hair. From a box of alabaster she pours ointment on His feet and with her glorious hair she

wipes them and presses her lips upon them in adoring devotion.

Of course everybody is disturbed. The guests are saying, "This prophet—if He be one—must have known about the woman. Why does He let her touch Him?" Simon's thoughts are plainly stamped upon his face. And now, listen—"I have something to say to thee, Simon." With some restraint and rather sadly perhaps, Simon says, "Rabbi, say on." Then comes the story of the big debtor and the small one and how the gracious creditor forgave them both, and the query as to which of the two loved the giver most. "That does not interest me," we hear Simon saying, "but I presume the one to whom he forgave most." Now Simon, it is your turn. It may be the Master's hand crept down His seamless robe and rested upon the head of the penitent. "I would not have mentioned it, Simon," He says, "but when I came to your house, you did not even offer Me water for My feet; but this woman has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss of greeting, but she, from the time she came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil you did not anoint, but she hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." There are many who identify this woman with Mary Magdalene, an assumption which is "imbedded in centuries of Christian art and literature," and her name will always persist as a synonym for a fallen but penitent woman. If this be true, is it not a beautiful and thrilling thing to see how the devotion of that once abandoned woman never failed by so much as a jot until the end? She was one of the few who saw Jesus die on Calvary, and regardless of the contumely and insult which might be heaped upon her, followed His body to the grave

and was first at the sepulchre on the first glorious Easter morning. With agonizing heart, she cries to him whom she took to be the gardener, " Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Then, with the same voice that first spake peace to her repentant soul, her Lord uttered the one word— " Mary! " Nobody else ever said it that way; into no other voice could such pure and tender solicitude be pressed. In an instant she knew the glad truth that her Lord was risen and she fell at His feet crying, " My Master, my Master! "

It is only one with a heart of stone who can remain stolid when he thinks of what happened, and how the joy of it never faded away, but was crowned with glory on the morning of the Resurrection. Small wonder that when Ernest Renan was looking for some one he could make responsible for a resurrection which he wished to deny that he thought of Mary and cried, " Divine power of love, sacred moments in which the passion of an hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God! "

There was another dinner in the house of another Simon and another Mary was there with another box of precious ointment. The odour of it filled the room and has permeated the ages. When the grasping and selfish complained about that gift, Jesus set the giver on a pedestal that will not be empty till the crack of doom. Wherever His Gospel shall be preached, that which this woman did, shall be told as a memorial of her. And the Master intimated, that any one who gives the best he has, merits a pedestal of the same sort.

Let me remind you of another dinner, one given in the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. I presume many of the sons and daughters of Martha will read these lines. If so, I have a fellow-feeling with you. I think scant jus-

tice has been done to Martha. If I am ever invited to the home in Bethany and either Martha or Mary are away, I hope it will not be Martha. I am debtor to her for unnumbered services and Jesus knows all about that for He was debtor Himself. What He said to Martha was "Don't fret. Cares are many and must be met, but one thing is needful." Let Martha and Mary wind their arms about each other. They need each other's help! The Church can learn a lesson from each of them.

Of all the Master's words at table, surely none were so precious as those He spoke at the Last Supper, when He Himself was host. He and His disciples knew it was the last talk He would have with them before He faced the tragedy which they could neither appreciate nor understand. We are reminded of a scene three hundred years before when the sacred ship came back from Delos and the eleven had stricken off the chains of Socrates that he might drink the fatal hemlock. "He was the gentlest and best that ever came here," said his jailer. But beautiful as was that scene under the clear blue of the Grecian sky, and beautiful as was that cheery message from the man who was faring forth on a great adventure, this is an hour before which all other human farewells gleam with lessened ray.

What does Jesus say as a pattern for all those hours when the disciples talk together? The one word which is in the air when words can be but few; the one word which rolls in infinite reiteration from His lips; the word which was the centre of His life and His kingdom—"Love." Here is a new command—"That ye love one another as I have loved you." Here is the measure of your discipleship—"Ye are My disciples if ye love one another. The measure of your *love* for Me will be the measure of your union with Me. If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." And then He falls to talking about the same thing that Socrates

talked about, only with an assurance and depth of meaning which Socrates never knew, and with good reason.

There are so many who are restive at any word concerning the future life. Not so Jesus. He reveled in it. His last table-talk was pitched to the tune of it—" Let not your heart be troubled. I am going away from you. In My Father's house are many mansions. I am going to prepare a home for you and we are all of us going to be there. Here you will be lonely and you will be troubled, but I shall have you in sacred keeping."

If we could live on here without headache or heartache; if we could feel no need and know no poverty; if no bitter words were spoken, and no unkindly acts done; if nobody grew old, and love was never disappointed; if no red flag ever waved, and the sexton never plied his spade, what a world this would be! But Jesus said over the table at the Last Supper, " I am going to get such a place ready for you."

Here the days and nights of friendships are so short! Here we cry, " All hail," and in the next instant, " Farewell! " Jesus said that His was a land of perfect friendship; that there was never any night with its darkness and separation. Sometimes we say, " I shall always be thinking of you," but Jesus said, " I shall always be *with* you. You may not see Me, but I shall be there,

" Closer to you than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

" The Holy Spirit, one with Me and the Father, will walk and talk with you. He will lead you into the paths of truth. He will be your Comforter in trouble, your Wisdom in ignorance, and will bring you safely through. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

After that they sang a song—His song—and the message

of it all was, "Death does not make any difference with love." We can say to those to whom our hearts are bound:

"Thee I loved always,
I love still but thee,
And thee will I love
Through eternity."

Death is only crossing a seam in the carpet, passing through an open door, changing your postal address. Here, and there, and always, love never faileth. These are the messages which fell from Jesus' lips when He spoke as never man spake, talked with His friends and with the world, out of His heart. Do you not feel the passion of them? Do they not awake an answering love in your own soul?

XI

THE TYRANNY OF "THINGS"

"For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—LUKE 12: 15.

MAN has always been a slave to the things which are seen. From the very first it has been almost impossible for him to shake off the rude grasp of the material. In one of his odes, Emerson said:

> *"The horseman serves the horse,*
> *The neat-herd serves the neat,*
> *The merchant serves the purse,*
> *The eater serves his meat;*
> *'Tis the day of the chattel,*
> *Web to weave, and corn to grind;*
> *Things are in the saddle,*
> *And ride mankind."*

It has so happened that, in the record of the ages, we dwell especially upon art, invention and science as the sign of man's advance and measure his greatness in terms of material conquest and accumulation. To us the fifteenth century was the century of discovery, with Michael Angelo to lead in art and the Humanists in learning. It was the age when Columbus discovered a new world; when Gutenberg discovered the art of printing and when Cabot brought back fresh laurels for the far-flung ships of England. We recognize the sixteenth century as a century of power, because it gave us Galileo and the wonderful discoveries to which he led the way. It also heralded the circumnavigation of the globe by Francis Drake. The seventeenth cen-

tury was the century of Kepler and Sir Isaac Newton; the eighteenth century that of the guilds and the dawn of the great industrial revolution. It was the time of Watts in England and Whitney and the cotton gin in America. The nineteenth century was the most marvelous of all. Stephenson in England and Fulton in America developing the use of steam; Morse and the telegraph, Bell and the telephone, MacCormick and the reaper, Elias Howe and the sewing machine, Goodyear with his method of treating rubber, Edison with the incandescent light and phonograph and many others.

In our century Marconi has given us wireless telegraphy, and flying has become a reality and the discoveries concerning the use of electricity are almost without number. These be thy gods, O Israel! Out of these great inventions has grown up a civilization unspeakably more comfortable than any which preceded their appearance. A careless thinker would say that these inventions had made the centuries great. But what are centuries for? What is, after all, the crowning product of the ages? What is that " far-off event toward which the whole creation moves " ? What is the measure of man or nation? What is the supreme product of the ages if it is not something which really makes inventions and accumulations of advantage only as they tend to accomplish it? Was there, after all, in the fifteenth century, anything quite so important for the development of manhood as the glorious Renaissance of learning and religion? Was there anything in the sixteenth century greater than the freedom of mind and conscience to which Martin Luther led the way and for which Tyndale and Sir Thomas More gave up their lives? Was there anything in the seventeenth century that meant more to humanity than the brave story of Bunyan and Cromwell and the founding of this great nation on our shores? Was there any dis-

covery in the eighteenth century that meant so much for the world as when America discovered herself and France burst the bonds of kingly rule and England was purified to her very core by the movement which Wesley and Methodism started? Greater than any triumph of art or science in the nineteenth century was the glorious declaration of the Gospel, made by devoted missionaries in almost every land beneath the sun.

After all, the greatest teaching of the ages was not that of scientist or publicist but the teaching of the Nazarene, enforced and enlarged by the Fisherman of Galilee and the Tent-maker of Tarsus. He is a wise man who remembers that there was a day before yesterday, and that there will be a day after to-morrow. Many a movement would have been saved from ending in catastrophe had it been wise enough to learn by the mistakes of other enterprises. Just as Greece descended from the glory of her arts and sciences to degradation unspeakable because she thought more of the body than of the soul; as Rome fell from her proud position as mistress of the world because she lost her manhood and purity through ease and unnameable debaucheries, so we may come to understand that neither increase of wealth or invention or comfort nor affluence can assure continued national success. It is not a great nation which has only a great army or a great navy or the largest exports. It is, after all, only manhood—only a nation actuated by great principles—that can long remain a great nation. When the character of her people crumble then her institutions totter and finally fall. If one doubt this, he has only to walk through the graveyard of the nations and scan the tombstones which are there set up and read the epitaphs which History has graven there.

What is true of centuries and of nations is supremely true of individual life. There never was an age in which a

materialistic philosophy was at a greater discount than in ours; but there has never been an age, possibly, when practical materialism had so gripped the individual as in the present age. We are under the tyranny of *things;* our devotion to them has fairly obsessed us. We insist upon a multiplication of creature comforts,—houses, dress, amusements—which is a fearful burden to carry.

We have made the forces of nature tributary to our desires, until it would seem that we had almost reached the limits of possibility, if it were not for the fact that past records encourage us to believe in unlimited possibilities for the future. We have encompassed the earth with bands of rail and wire; distance has been blotted out by the telegraph, the telephone and wireless telegraphy, and we have now entered upon the conquest of the air.

We pride ourselves that we have lengthened the span of life and, in the aggregate, this is true. With our modern knowledge and prophylactic methods of aseptic and antiseptic treatment every baby has twice the chance of life that it had a generation ago. But alas, when a man gets to be fifty years of age, his chance is not as good now as was the chance of his father. The pressure of events has doubled his blood-pressure and he hastens toward his long home, pushed thereto by his lack of rest and recuperative hours.

Speed is the great factor in present-day existence. We are trying to break records in the air and on land and sea; that we may go a little faster, we bore holes through the ground, under our seas and rivers. The object of all this speed is not to bring some greater deliverance to our loved ones or to humanity but simply to make a little more money and to make it a little faster than heretofore. If your speed only gets you that much quicker to the graveyard, what's your hurry? Here is the story of life in a nutshell—striving

twenties, thriving thirties, fiery forties, faithful fifties, sober sixties, solemn seventies, aching eighties—the sod. God!

We have come to think of ourselves as parts of a great machine and matters of business and politics as being of supreme importance and character. Conscience and soul are laid aside with our Sunday clothes. We are developing a race physically neurasthenic and irritable, morally stolid and impotent. Our conquests over nature, instead of adding to the real contentment of our lives, have multiplied our cares and our servitude.

It would be sad if our life which has increased in comfort should lose in peace and virtue; if at one end of the social scale child-labour, overcrowding, and drink, made a decent home life impossible and the mania for pleasure seeking, the rush of unnumbered engagements had overthrown all happy family life. And what shall we say of the spiritual life and of the Church which should develop it. There is a hymn we used to sing, which ran as follows:

"Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord,
Abide in Him always and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on,
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see."

But the voices of business and pleasure drown the voice of communion and we are so busy that we cannot take time for our Lord. When the Sabbath Day comes, which ought to be a day when we not only "knit up the raveled sleeve of care," but when we store our souls like reservoirs, from the great watersheds of Christian experience, we are physically and mentally so weary that we think we are justified in robbing God of our morning devotions.

When we lose the moral and spiritual fibre the best about us is gone. We have increased our fortune only to increase the *mis*fortune in our own life and our own family. Oh, the tragedy of full barns and a starved soul! the ceasing to be good that one may multiply his goods! It will require some great moral breakwater to turn the torrent that is sweeping down upon us like a tidal wave. But the salvation of the individual, the home and the state, all depend upon our being able to effect that turn.

Does your home compare favourably, in attention to morals and religion and the development of the old Roman virtues of integrity and self-denial, with the home in which you were brought up as a child? Are you as anxious to train your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord as your fathers and mothers were? Do you talk to your children about the religious life and do you set them as good an example as did those mothers and fathers, the lustre of whose lives shines with unabating brilliancy though their faces that grew wrinkled in your behalf have been sleeping many a long year under the daisies? You have a larger home and a finer one than that in which you were brought up. You sit sometimes in your library, surrounded by the masters of thought and look upon the costly rugs on the floor and the works of art on the walls; you sit at table and note the products of the silversmith's and potter's art and you say,—"How much better this is than the plain home away out in the country where I lived as a barefooted freckle-faced boy." But what do your works of art, your multiplication of rooms, and the gleam of your silver and the sheen of your silks from the looms of Lyons amount to in the end?

Can they buy love? Many a wife would give all her jewels and fine furniture and costly fabrics if her husband were as devoted to her and to their children as he is to his

business. The very multiplication of those elegancies, and what goes with them, has laid such a burden on the life of the husband and father, that he is old before his time. The anxieties of life are contracting his heart and plowing deep furrows in brow and brain. Do your amenities of life increase the joy in it? Do they touch the fringe even of your garment of peace? Have not the number of your possessions destroyed your taste for the simpler joys of domesticity and friendship? Have you not given up the mild condiments which gave flavour to life to indulge only in tabascos, so that the old, sweet, quiet way of living seems flat, stale and unprofitable? Are you laying up any reserve of happiness day by day on which to live in the day of the sere and yellow leaf, when winter winds blow about you, and you need a warm chimney-corner and happy recollections to nourish your soul?

We are fain to say that, at last, man is coming into his own. He is reaping greater laurels than ever and his inheritance is within sight. But what is that inheritance? What will a man find when he comes into his own? We have found that money is a hard thing to get, an easy thing to lose, and a bitter thing to hold if it be gained dishonestly. We are also finding out that fortunes have no love in them, no joy, no uplift of the soul. Heavy are the keys which hang at a rich man's girdle. If there was one thing about which Jesus was certain, it was the danger of riches and the narrowing power of wealth. He shows us that the greatest miracle of all—as great as for a camel to walk through the eye of a needle—is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. He is always sounding this word in the ears of the people—"Leave that thou hast and come and follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." A young man heard that once, and found it a hard saying, "went away sorrowful," and disappeared. We do not know

what became of him. There is more than an even chance that one day the Roman saw him in his affluence, singled him out as a fine object for his rapacity, trumped up some political charge against him, confiscated his property and threw him into prison, whereby he lost the money he had refused to give, and lost the soul he had refused to save.

If devils ever indulge in mirth they must laugh out loud at the choices of men—when they see them leave the gold and take the tinsel; are content with the adornment of body and life and estate, when all the time they are walking on the edge of a chasm six feet by three, into which they will one day fall, unaccompanied by any of their accumulations and possessions!

Mere *things* never made a home and never will. You can make a palace out of marbles and tapestries and all that sort of thing, but you can never make a home out of them. You can build up a fortune and gain temporal eminence, but these will never take the place of an honest conscience and the approval of God. Give up the struggle which has made you old before your time and has sapped the current of your life, or is dancing before you now like a will-o'-the-wisp, to lead you to the swamp and mire of irrevocable doom.

Young man, with the gleam of the rising sun smiting you in the face, don't let the "inner light" fail. Put the first things first and live up to them. Young woman, lover of the beautiful and possessed of a pure and beautiful life, sully not the fine gold nor change it to dross. You have a great treasure in your hand—the treasure of an immortal life. You have powers immeasurable, valuable beyond the splendour of Golconda's mines. There is only One who can show you how to use that life in all its high capacities; only One who can make such an investment of it as will yield dividends that outshine the fabled wealth of

Crœsus and outlast the proudest structures that wealth can rear.

There is a new and better day dawning, there *must* be, or we are undone! The call of God is in the air—the call of a new measure of values and a new conception of life in which souls shall be reckoned as of higher value than things, and where spirit shall triumph over matter, as Christ reigns as Lord.

XII

GOD'S CURE FOR THE BLUES

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree behold then an angel touched him and said unto him, Arise and eat!
—I Kings 19: 5.

DISCOURAGED! That is a good word with a bad prefix, and a word is known by the prefix it bears. What a sad and evil company this prefix leads out—Disease, Disgrace, Dishonour, Disorder, Distrust, Distress, Discontent! The man who is discouraged is in a sad estate. Taking the word to pieces, we see that it means the man who has lost heart.

"Now, the heart giveth grace unto every art," and he who has lost it has lost the joy of life. If a man can do anything to hearten his neighbour, he renders the greatest service which a friend can render. It will be a blessed thing for us all, if we can find that God has a cure for the "blues." There are discouraged people all about us. Some are discouraged about business. Times have been poor and they have lost heart in their work, and confidence in their own ability. They are discouraged about their health, and about their family. Dear ones are sick, boys and girls are headed in the wrong direction, and their hearts are like to break. The times are out of joint, the cost of living is too great, there is social warfare on every side. Political contentions fill the air and, altogether, it sometimes seems that the largest and saddest order on the face of the earth is The Knights of the Juniper Tree.

How human it is for people to be discouraged! Sooner

or later, I suppose, we all find ourselves in this class. So we ought to be patient with one another. What a fine position Sam Walter Foss takes in that immortal poem of his, *A Friend to Man.* Many years ago I married Foss to the sister of my college chum. Let me quote the last stanza of his poem:

" Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by—
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in this scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man."

For ourselves, we roll into one all the evils we ever had all we have now, and all we ever expect to have, and we worry about them. The Bible itself is filled with the sad plaint of discouraged men. Even Jacob, standing before Pharaoh at the ripe age of one hundred and thirty years was fain to say that his days had been " few and evil." Moses was discouraged, and cried: " I am not able to bear all this people alone. If Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness." Gideon was a man of faith usually, but he was discouraged one day and said, " The Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." But that was pure imagination. The Lord had done nothing of the sort. Job was a patient man, but he cried out: " My soul is weary of my life. I will utter freely my complaint upon myself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul." Jeremiah, who made kings tremble, said: " Cursed be the day wherein I was born, for my days are consumed with shame." Solomon sounded the whole gamut of human experience, but cried at the last that it was all " vanity and

vexation of spirit." Jonah was one of the charter members of the Knights of the Juniper Tree, and tried to convince himself that he did well to be angry with his fate.

The fact is, the old kings and prophets were very much like the rest of us. The best of us at times grow weary and discouraged. It is true that John Wesley once said that he had never experienced lowness of spirit for a quarter of an hour in his life. But he was a remarkable man, and left no successors to inherit his patient spirit. The most of us see times when we are tired of life's struggle, and our defeats are so many and our victories come by so narrow a margin that we are seldom bold as we come into battle. History and literature alike is filled with the plaint of discouraged men, and we share it with our brothers. In spite of all our toil we are not satisfied. The river runs to the sea, but the sea is never full. What we began with enthusiasm we prosecute at length with indifference. The flood tide is gone, and only the slimy beds remain with never a white crest of the coming sea. As you watch the flotsam and jetsam of our city streets, you are fain to say with the old Scotchwoman, " It's a sair sight; a sair sight! " One of our English essayists has made a list of the exclamations of men in " the blues," and it is dismal reading for a rainy day. Byron sums up his experience as follows:

> *" Through life's drear road so dim and dirty,*
> *I have dragged on to three and thirty;*
> *What have those years brought to me?*
> *Nothing, except thirty-three! "*

" Our condition is so wretched that utter annihilation would be preferable," said Schopenhauer, the arch-pessimist. Diocletian grew tired of his throne, and declared he " would rather plant cabbages in Salona than rule the world in Byzantium." Servius said " he had been everything from

peasant to emperor, and nothing was of any good." Abderrahman the Magnificent said he had had but fourteen happy days in all his life; and Franklin surpassed him in the shortness of his count, for he said he had had "but five fairly happy days," and if he were to live his life over again he doubted if he could reach a round half-dozen. St. Bernard said life was "begun in blindness, continued in toil and ended in emptiness." Savonarola and Knox unite with Luther in saying that men were not worth the trouble they had given God to save them, and prayed that He would come forthwith and take them home. Cromwell cried out that his life had been a burden too heavy for a man to bear. The poets are not always hopeful and happy. Shakespeare says:

> *"Tired with all these,*
> *For restful death I pray."*

Cowper longs for a "lodge in some vast wilderness," where "rumour of oppression and deceit may never reach him more." Shelley sings:

> *"I could lie down like a tired child*
> *And weep away this life of care."*

With such a threnody from saints and sinners, ancients and moderns, young and old, vexing the air with its sad complaint, no wonder we are tempted to join them.

Let us be thankful that *God* has a *cure* for discouraged people. Let no man go to his cups and produce a sodden soul in the vain attempt to cure a wounded spirit. Do not go to the festivities of the fast set, the excesses of social life, the fascinations of gay surroundings and company. For these will only plunge you into the blackness of darkness. And, least of all, don't undertake to rid yourself of misery by rushing into the presence of God unbidden and unpre-

pared, and throw back into the teeth of the Creator a life which you have not been noble enough to use.

If you are disappointed or discouraged in any way, try God's remedy. What that is, may be learned from the case of Elijah. Here he is under a juniper tree. You would never have thought it of Elijah; he who had locked up the cisterns of the heavens and carried the keys in his pocket for years; he who had overthrown the altars of Baal; who had been vindicated on Carmel by fire from heaven, and whose hand was even now blistered and stained from putting four hundred false prophets to the sword. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Sure enough, one is surprised at him! What has happened that a man of courage has become a coward? Nothing but the wagging of one woman's tongue. Jezebel had sent word to him, "I will make your life like that of the prophets of Baal by to-morrow!" and Elijah ran from a woman, and did not stop till he was clear of the country and a full day's journey into the wilderness. Perhaps there is a lesson for us here—before we go any further. Are you discouraged? Are you not the man who sang not long ago, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits . . . who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction"? Are you not the man who once cried, amid the shadows, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God"? Are you not the same woman who had a great victory and set up a memorial, saying: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me; I will not fear what man can do unto me"? Was not your life so full of bounties that you sang long ago, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"? What are you doing under the juniper tree?

Thousands of you take annual vacations. Why not *give*

a vacation to all your carking cares? It ought to be easy to see God and feel Him. When you see the birds go flitting by and hear them carol each to his mate: when you see the aster and the goldenrod nodding to each other in quiet trust and remember Him who clothed them with beauty and watches over them, how can you fret any more?

" The little cares that fretted me
I lost them yesterday—
Among the fields above the sea,
Among the winds at play,
Among the lowing of the herds,
The rustling of the trees,
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what may pass,
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay,
Among the husking of the corn,
Where drowsy poppies nod
Where ill thoughts die and good are born—
Out in the fields with God."

But see what God did for a man who was so forgetful and so discouraged. First, He feeds him. (It is no use to talk with a starving man.) God satisfies his needs; an angel spreads the board. (A frugal feast spread by angel hands is better than a stalled ox seasoned with the bitter spices of sin.) Twice the angel feeds him, and to good purpose, for in the strength of that he goes forty days in the wilderness. God's manna will give you strength that will last. The devil may spread a great table, but there is no nourishment in his food. His apples are " the apples of Sodom."

God takes Elijah into the wilderness to Horeb, to talk with him. It has often happened that God has led men away where the voices of the world are hushed, and in the great

silences has spoken to them. After the tornado and the earthquake and the fire are past, there comes the " still, small voice," and He who was not in the mighty tempest comes in the whispered message. " What are you doing? " says God, and the prophet answered, " I who have done so much, am now a refugee. What shall I do? " The answer is sharp and stirring. " Go back. Take up the work you have to do. You have a commission to make kings. Get out of your cave and go at it! " So God says to every man: " Take up your work." The chances are that you came into your despondency through lack of service. You were so busy about yourself that you forgot your neighbour. You have failed to realize that you are His follower, who " came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." There is many a heart to help. There is much land to be possessed, and many enemies to be overcome. But God is with you and He will give you a victory.

" It may be the bitter future
Is less bitter than you think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before you come to drink;
Or if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside the brink! "

If you are advanced in years and weak, if the burdens of life are heavy, let your soul hark back to prayer. If you cannot man the lifeboat, help to launch it, and remember that, " as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff." We are tempted, like the prophet, to think that we are alone, that no one will wield the sword or lift the spear with us. God told Elijah that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and there are far more about *you* who are interested for you and for the kingdom of God, than you can know. God is not dead. He who has cared for thee from the cradle

will care for thee to the end. He is more interested than you can possibly be in the world and its work. Do not be alarmed, He and not you trundled it into space. He and not you gave its worn rocks a baptism of blood from His own heart. Pray for the touch of the angel that may open your eyes to see that the hills are full of the chariots and the horsemen of God. Get out from under the juniper tree. Gird up your loins for a pilgrimage with God. Israel will be won. The day is already dawning. Laughter and hope!

" Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

XIII

GOD'S WAY IN THE SEA

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters.
—PSALM 77: 19.

MANY of us are lovers of the sea. We gain strength and vigour from it. We go to it after the passing of busy months, as a child goes home. We can say with Byron:

> *"And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy*
> *Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be*
> *Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy*
> *I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me*
> *Were a delight: and if the freshening sea*
> *Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,*
> *For I was as it were a child of thee*
> *And trusted to thy billows far and near,*
> *And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here."*

I have spent years by the sea. I know its craft, and I know its men, from the fo'castle to the quarterdeck, from the hold to the bridge. I knew them first in the days of the old whalers, where a single voyage lasted four long years. I have officiated at funerals where there was no corpse; the poor sailorman had been carried down by a whale in the icy waters of the North, months or years before, and his friends had only found it out on the return of his ship.

The story of the heroism of the sea sends the blood racing through our veins and makes us think better of our kind. I have known good men and bad among sailors, but I never knew a single atheist among them. A deep-sea sailor has

met God too often on the great deep ever to deny His existence.

There are many references in the Word of God to the sea, and it is interesting to note that, for the most part, they were made by men who knew little about the sea; yet their testimony is corroborated a hundred fold by those "who do business in the great waters" and whose life is a part of the life of the sea.

The ocean stands before us, first, as the representative of God's creative and supporting power. It was the sea and not the land which first appeared. The sea is the mother of the continents and not their child. Seven-tenths of the surface of the earth is made of its seas, and out of these comes nourishment for the land. At this moment there are oceans hanging in the air above us. The winds will harness themselves to them. They will break their misty cauldrons at the feet of the great hills, and all the moisture will trickle down, percolating through the soil, nourishing the grass and flowers until, at last, all its superfluity is gathered in the blessed streams and returns to the ocean out of which it went; but in the meanwhile it has nourished the earth.

Seven-tenths of this surface of ours is kept busy caring for the life of the other three-tenths. Scientists will tell you that every year fourteen feet of the surface of the great ocean is taken into the air to fructify the earth.

God has great paths through the sea. Out yonder a little way from our shore, you will find a current sweeping out. What is it? It is the path of God in the sea. You call it the Gulf Stream. Down at the Equator you will find another encircling the globe. What is it? It is the path of God circling in the great deep. The waters of the tropics go up yonder to the Arctics, and the cold waters of the north are sent down again to be heated by the tropical sun. It all means that God's preserving influence is looking after

the palm of the tropics, and the pine of the north. The ice of the north does its work in making habitable the parts of the earth in which otherwise we could not live. What evidences there are of the power, the wisdom, and the eternity of God!

Secondly, the ocean is especially the place of *God's* work. We divide up the land among ourselves. We stake off a part of it and we say, " That belongs to me." But no man ever staked off a rod of the sea and said " That is mine."

> *" Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!*
> *Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;*
> *Man marks the earth with ruin, his control*
> *Stops with the shore."*

We build our highways on the land, and the laws of all nations keep them intact for us to use. Here we run our iron bands across the continents, and bind one city and one state to another, but out yonder no man has the right to say, " This is mine and I will put my path in the sea." We run our steel-shod keels through the waves, but the waters close in upon us and leave the sea as placid as before.

We mark the earth with buildings and we furrow it with our graves, but on the surface of the great deep, how changed!

> *" Time writes no furrows on thine azure brow.*
> *As the ocean was in the days after the creation,*
> *So it is now."*

That which is ever changing is changeless, and that which seems to toss with every passing moment is, after all, the only thing on the surface of the earth which abides unchanged.

Every land bears the record of centuries of toil and blood; but the sea bears no records on the surface of the balanced waters. How strange it all seems, when you come

to think of it, that God holds the ocean in the hollow of His hand and never spills a drop! This world of ours is whirling around a thousand miles an hour and unseen arms are reaching down from the planets and tugging at the waves, and yet they never overflow their bounds, for they hear the call through the stillness: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," so that the greatest force on earth bears a bit in its mouth and is tethered by a rope of sand! God working in the sea! He took the title to seven-tenths of the earth's surface and He keeps it in His own name. Men have had sense enough not to interfere with that.

The Supreme Court of the United States has been asked by millionaires to make it impossible for a fisherman to put his little hut by the shore and tend his trawls; but the Supreme Court said to the millionaires of America, "No man shall ever be able to say that a rod of the great deep belongs to him, so that he can put up a fence and say to anybody else, 'Keep out of it.'"

Thirdly, the sea is typical of God's love. They tell the story of a little fresh-air girl who went to the beach at Newport and looked out upon the great stretch of waters for the first time and burst into tears. When they asked her why she wept, she said, "I never saw *enough* of anything before!" The great ocean of God's love! Did I say that no man had a right to any particular part of the sea? Yes, but with that is the other thought to which I call your attention; that all men have a right and a title to *all* the sea, and that is the blessed message which the ocean brings about the love of God. No man has a right to stake off a little part of God's love and say, "That is mine alone." No man—black or white or brown or yellow—no one in silks or satins or homespuns can go out upon the great sea and claim all the fish that may be there. He may plunge into

the depths of the sand for the pearls that may lie there, and no man can say him nay. The same thing is true of the ocean of God's love, in whose depths the bones of no mariners are whitening, and along whose shores there are no wrecks of ill-fated ships. Let us thank God for the great stretch of His wonderful love beyond all our need, and all for you and for me.

" There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.
* * * * *
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind."

Men build their houses and their pyramids on the face of the earth, and, for the most part, God lets them alone until " the gnawing teeth of time " grinds them to the dust. Now and then the earth shivers and the work of centuries falls; but in the sea God does not take man into partnership. " God's seas are great and our boats are small " says the lamenting fisherman. There is a towering cliff up yonder, and the waters are lapping its stony feet. O, mighty cliff, you are to come to dust some day! There will be nothing left of you but sand! And the limpid waves at your feet will be your undoing! So God makes continents in the sea, and tears down those that are, and slips them back into the old bed. God is working out this very hour, new plans and new continents in the heart of the ocean that shall be lifted one day to blossom and to bear fruit.

Time was when the ocean was the barrier between lands. Men looked at it as a thing that could not be understood; a barrier that could not be crossed; but with the magnetic needle, which God gave them to guide them, they have steered into every port, and the oceans have become no longer the barriers between nations, but the open path over

which nations pass to one another, binding the continents together, and making them as one.

If you defy the laws of the sea, the sea becomes your enemy. If you work in harmony with the laws of the sea, it becomes your friend. If any man tries to deny the law and purpose of the Almighty, he will get into trouble; if he sails in harmony with the laws of God, he will come at last, and blessedly, into port. Let us bear that in mind and comfort ourselves as we look upon the ocean, remembering that the greatest man in all the world is as helpless as an iron fort out yonder in the hands of the great sea; and that every single man, big or little, needs to throw himself alike upon the mercy of God, for there is no other help for him.

What exploits of human courage the sea has witnessed, time will not allow me to tell. It seems but yesterday since the world sorrowed over a colossal disaster in the wreck of the *Titanic*, the mistress of the seas. Nothing so vast had ever floated before. It was her maiden voyage. So splendid was her equipment, so great her speed, as to challenge the taste of the cultured, the delight of the pleasure-seeker, the eager spirit of the man of affairs, and all these timed themselves to the date of her sailing. Amid the congratulations of the gathered thousands, with her decks crowded with wealth, achievement and beauty, she swings out from her pier, and to the rhythmic beat of the mighty engines in her flaming heart she begins her fateful voyage. The captain stood on the bridge and men saw him, but Death sat upon the prow, and no man beheld him. No matter who stood at the wheel throughout the voyage, Death was the steersman of the liner and none knew it. There were sounds of revelry on deck, but just as the last loiterers were leaving the banquet hall and the lights were burning low, there is a hoarse cry through the night and the great ship shudders

from stem to stern as an iceberg gashes her side. But though the ship goes down, humanity triumphs; and while *her* lights go out, courage blazes into a conflagration of devotion that will illuminate the coming ages. Rich men gave way to poor. The strong gave place to the weak. The man who had a life preserver gave it over to the woman who had none, and when she asked him what he would do, he answered "Get another." "In that he lied like a gentleman," for he knew there were no others to be had. And so Mr. Greatheart signed his own death warrant with a smile! "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Finally, the ocean reminds us of that last voyage which all men must face. We go down to our wharves here and see our friends take vessel for some port across the sea. We wave them farewell and congratulate them on their good fortune. After a few days we say of them "To-day they are in London, to-morrow they will be in Paris." Then we think of them being in the Alps, or on the Grand Canal in Venice. We say "How fortunate and happy they are." But when we see our friends sail away on that other voyage there are tears in our eyes and bitter sobbing, whereas we ought to say, "They who lately trod this earth in pain are now walking the highways of the City of God." "They have passed out of darkness into everlasting light and eternal joy."

> *"For though from out this bourne of time and place*
> *The floods may bear me far;*
> *I hope to see my Pilot face to face,*
> *When I have crost the bar."*

So the ocean we call Death only unites us to a larger life. It is only the translucent sea over which we sail into the blessed harbour where all the dear ones come tripping

down in welcome, and the gates lift up for the eternal home-coming of the soul. Let us comfort our hearts with these blessed thoughts as we contemplate the sea. May we be drawn nearer to God thereby and become more hopeful of entering the City which hath foundations which lies at the end of the last voyage. Some day the sea will give up its dead and the waves slip away, for of the Eternal City the Revelator said, " there was no more sea."

" The winds that on my ocean run
Blow from all worlds beyond the sun;
Through life, through death, through faith, through time—
Great breaths of God they sweep sublime."

XIV

THE PROSPEROUS LIFE

Beloved, I wish above all things that those mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.—III JOHN 2.

JOHN, like Paul, was fond of his friends. He had an instinct for making them and keeping them. He had a few garlands to put over their shoulders while they were alive. He calls this man Gaius "Beloved." Now, to such a man who has caught the spirit of Him upon whose breast John had leaned, the heart of John goes out. The two men are kindred spirits. He sends to him a greeting which is at the same time a benediction. It was equally fitting at the beginning and at the close of his message. John tells him that he prays for his prosperity. That word, taken to pieces, means that he might have a good journey, that he may not lose his way, and that he may come on, upon a smooth road with alacrity.

We have accommodated that phrase a little to the nineteenth and twentieth century conditions, but we are still anxious that, in general terms, our friends should prosper. First, in material things. We ask them when we meet them, "How are you getting on?" "How is trade?" "Is business good?" and "Are the profits good?" The father takes his son and says, "My son, I want you to prosper in business. I want you to accumulate a competency. Now, here are the principles on which you must govern your life to make a success." And then he will give him a decalogue of worldly wisdom. "Thou shalt be diligent, prudent and economical. Thou shalt not sign other people's notes, nor make any of

thine own if thou canst help it. Thou shalt look after Number One and expect others to do the same. The borrower is servant to the lender; therefore, be careful of thine obligations. If thou hast a dollar, all men are thy servants to the extent of that dollar. Therefore, accumulate as many as thou canst." Such is the outline of the decalogue of the prosperous, and it is written in the highway of success, that " he who runs may read."

There is no question that any of us, in writing a letter to a true friend, would say, " I hope you will be prosperous." There is nothing that we ask more continuously and strenuously for ourselves and for others than that they may be relieved from the fret of daily anxieties; from carking care in trying to make both ends meet. Many a man is so oppressed in trying to make a *living* that he has ceased to pay any attention as to how he makes a *life*. If we really care for anybody, about the first thought that would enter our prayers in their behalf would be, " Let them have enough for their comfort and a widening field of opportunity and success! "

John also prays that Gaius may be in health. And, after all, that second prayer is quite as important as the first. Thomas Carlyle, whose life was one long struggle against disease, like Prometheus with a vulture forever gnawing at his heart, once said to his students at Edinburg, " There is no kind of achievement you can make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets or millions? " It is true that great spirits have won though shackled by bodies which made life one long round of physical torment. To see a great engine housed in so frail a structure that every revolution threatens to shake the building into ruin is a sad sight. It is a tragedy when Hercules tries to win a race in a rotten boat. When we see what men, such as Athanasius and Milton and Southey

and Payson and Prescott and Scott and hundreds of others of the world's great men have accomplished in spite of headache and heartache, of blindness and pain, we cannot help thinking what marvels they might have wrought if only they could have gone to their task with a clear mind and a body unburdened of pain.

Emerson was right in saying, " Health is the first wealth." It is a beautiful thing to go to one's task with a body unwearied, with all its parts in perfect adjustment, so that one is unconscious of any part of the vast and intricate mechanism, each part performing its function like a perfect machine. Burdens are easily borne, work is easily done and one can smile at misfortune, if only he has health. Better than wealth, better than any gift which nature or opportunity can give, is perfect, bounding, joyous health. And that the Apostle prays for his friend.

But here is another and limiting phrase, which defines both wealth and health, which sets the measure of prosperity and physical well-being. " That thou mayest prosper and be in health, *even as thy soul prospereth.*" We have often heard the dictum of the poet: " The mind's the measure of the man," but here is the dictum of the Apostle, which is infinitely higher: " The *soul's* the measure of the man." When the Apostle prays that Gaius may in all things have prosperity and health, according to the measure of his spiritual well-being, he speaks with the discrimination of a prophet of God. And herein he announces the fundamental principle of a prosperous life. If a man have wealth and no conscience with it, he is a doomed man. And all he waits for is the opportunity to send his property where the property of Lot went in Sodom, and to leave him as poor as Dives was when he was carried out in state over the steps where the dogs had licked the sores of Lazarus. If a man's possessions lead him to a position of influence, polit-

ical or otherwise, and there is no conscience in him, the day is fast hastening when his name will be cast out as evil, and become a hissing and a byword among men. And the greater his eminence, the greater his fall. Though he mount up like Lucifer, he shall fall, with him, to fearful ruin. The money and opportunity of the godless man duly multiplies his power for evil, and so multiplies the condemnations upon his soul. Wealth is a good thing if it be well used. It is an unspeakable curse if it weights a man's soul to perdition. Health is a beautiful thing if it be used for the well-being of men, if it furnish power to a devoted soul to minister to his kind and serve his day and generation. But if good health is only desired that debauchery may be multiplied, that gambling may be increased, the poorer health a man has the sooner his tale of iniquity will be told. Solomon had prosperity, but see what becomes of him. Samson had health and strength, but behold what he did with them!

We use the term " profanity " as if it referred alone to the habit of swearing. That is really a small part of its iniquity. The profane man is he who makes holy things of no account. The New Testament calls Esau a " profane man " when he turned away from his birthright for a mess of pottage. The profane man is not simply the man who uses God's name in vain. He is the man who maligns God's requirements and turns away from His law. The health of such a man but renders his iniquity greater. John tells us plainly in our text, that the measure of any man's prosperity and the value of any man's health, is determined by the standard of his soul.

Suppose that, to-morrow, this standard were applied and the richest men in your city were the men of noblest soul, of highest spiritual life, or purest aspiration? Suppose the palaces of this city were to be filled to-morrow, on this basis? What would take place? How many men who live

in palaces and in streets where the rich congregate would be forced to give up their homes of elegance and move into the squalid tenements of the poor? What surprises there would be! How we should realize the truth of the Word of God, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree." The vans which the rich men call would hold the shriveling of the contents of mansions, as Balzac pictures the shriveling of the wild ass's skin. The smallest wagon would carry the treasures of many a multi-millionaire, and the poor man, stepping out from the door of his hovel, with his eyes touched by the angels which opened to the prophet's servant the mountains filled with the chariots and horsemen of God, would realize himself possessed of treasures untold. The vans would creak under the burden of riches that would go over the threshold of his little home. And as he moved into the great palaces which ill-gotten wealth had deserted, he would crowd their corridors and drawing-rooms with furniture more beautiful than any which graced the Empire or enriched the castles of English lords. What do you say about this transition? Would you like to see this law put into effect to-morrow? Many a man would say, "I did not know that that were possible. Wait a little while, that I may have a chance to arrange my wealth in harmony with it. If I had to move to-day, I fear it would be to a small house and on a narrow street. I did not know that this law was going into force. Let me have another chance. If I had only known, I would have acted differently."

Let me say in kindness, but with all emphasis, you *did* know it. And all these years you have known it and all your work has been done in plain sight of it. But isn't it sad to think that while this truth was known, it was practically forgotten? Isn't it to be regretted that so few men laid it to heart and so many thought that the differences

which men set up were differences that would last and that the principle of human choice would usurp the place of the Divine Will?

" Ah," but you say, " this is only a picture you are drawing. It is not really true. When the first of October comes there will be no such movement as you are suggesting. Your plan will not be worked! " Ah, but it will! As true as there is a God in heaven and a present which fills men's souls with condemnation and a future which challenges and overshadows the present; as true as there is a soul at all, so truly will this fiction of mine become fact. It may not be on the first of October, but each one of us may well say with Thomas Bayley Aldrich in *An Untimely Thought:*

> *" I wonder what day of the week—*
> *I wonder what month of the year—*
> *Will it be midnight or morning*
> *And who will bend over my bier? "*

Some day it will be moving day. There may be *black* horses to draw the van and black plumes waving over it, but it will be *moving* day. Out of the palace or the hovel, out of the splendid apartment or out of the attic, into the " house not made with hands," it is moving day! Of that, I need say no more.

Let us come back now to our text: " Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper, and be in health even as thy soul prospereth." That is my wish for each one of you. I hope that you will thank God in your heart that somebody has brought to your attention a half-forgotten truth before it is too late.

There is a story of a dreamer who, one day, found herself a stranger in the streets of the New Jerusalem looking for her own house in the many-mansioned home. She passed down the street where the homes of splendour were, and

said, " Is not my home among these? " But the angel who conducted her said, " It is not on this street." They turned out of the great thoroughfares into narrower ones, and passed other homes that seemed ample and comfortable. They came at last to a little straitened house and the angel said, " This is the home which you are to live in." " I cannot live here," the newcomer cried. " On earth I had a palace. Every luxury was mine. It was a great and splendid home. How can you ask me to come here to a home like this? " " While you were on earth you were building this house up here," the angel replied. " We could not put into it more than you sent us. Therefore, if the home seems narrow and mean, it is because there was very little material in your life, out of which we could build."

Once the Galilæan was talking about the same thing that I have been talking about,—only incalculably better—and a young man, eager-eyed and athletic, came running to Him—and asked, " How can I inherit eternal life? " The Galilæan's eyes grew tender with love and yearning, and then they blazed with resolute appeal—" Sell what you have, or give it away, and come with Me. You and I, *and the cross!* " But the young man flinched, he hadn't the sand. He couldn't stand his cross. What a pity!

There was another man whom Jesus loved and who caught the Master's spirit. He looked into those yearning eyes until his own glowed with an apocalypse, his own sweet soul could hardly understand and he wrote: " Love not the world nor the *things* that are in the world. If any man *love* the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever!"

XV

THE HOLY SPIRIT

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He should teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.''
—JOHN 14: 26.

NO MATTER what sceptics may say to the contrary, this is a Christian country, from the President to the instructors of our youths. Those who sit in the seats of the mighty are, for the most part, Christian men and women, and I feel that most of us, whether members of a Christian church or not, are vitally interested in religion.

There is no question connected with the manifestation of God to men around which greater mysteries have gathered, than about the personality and power of the Holy Spirit. I am not interested, however, in the consideration of this question from the standpoint of theology. The theologian will tell you there have been three dispensations;—that of the Father from the beginning until the advent of His Son Jesus Christ; that of the Son covering the years of Christ's early ministry, and that of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, in which the world has been since Christ's ascent to the Father. A consideration of these eras would involve questions which I have neither time nor inclination to discuss. In the baptismal formula the phrase stands: " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." How came we to use that name—the *Holy Ghost?* It came about in this way. In the Anglo-Saxon,

which was the speech of our forebears, "*geist*" or "*gast*" meant spirit, or breath. When, in 1611, the translators of the New Testament sought to put the Greek into English they found the word "*pneuma*" meaning breath or spirit and translated it by the old Anglo-Saxon "*gast,*" or ghost; but the later revisions, of which we have had many during the last quarter of a century, use the word "spirit"—Holy Spirit.

Our knowledge concerning His character and work must come from the words of Jesus, that are surrounded by circumstances of infinite pathos. It was the last night of His earthly life. He had told His disciples He must die, but went on to say, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." This word "Comforter" has also a hidden meaning which we do well to understand. We often use it in the sense of describing a consoler; but if you take the word to pieces, you will see that it has quite another meaning, and that is, *strength-giver*. The Holy Spirit was not only to soothe in the midst of sorrow, and to impart courage, but to gird with strength and faith. Then He tells them what the function of the Holy Spirit will be. He is Christ's *alter ego,* His *other self,* in that He makes good His promise to His disciples—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Jesus declared that this glorious Helper would do many things for His disciples—"He shall teach you all things,"—just as a teacher performs not only an intellectual function, but in matters of many kinds which the scholar faces, becomes his helper. The scholar is disturbed with problems too complicated for him to unravel. The teacher then comes to the student's side and shows him where some mistaken premise is responsible for a wrong conclusion. An *impatient* teacher is no teacher at all. The scholar does not learn truth at a single lesson; he has to be led to it step by step. Christ

says " He shall *lead* you into all truth." Again, Jesus said, " He shall glorify Me."

It is quite the vogue, in our time, to talk of the " re-discovery of Jesus." How are we to re-discover Him except through the Holy Spirit? " He will bring to your remembrance all the things that I have said. He will be the perpetual reminder of every last word of Mine. I will be with you in every hour of your extremity. You will not see Me, but I shall be with you." So, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has become true,

> *" That one face rather grows,*
> *And decomposes but to recompose*
> *Becomes my Christ who feels and knows."*

What, then, are our personal relations to the Holy Spirit? We are accustomed to say in our Creed, " I believe in the Holy Ghost." Is that merely pious cant, and a meaningless phrase, only spoken at a time when it is repeated too fast for meditation, or do we really give the assent of our life to it? We have need to give this question a most solemn consideration.

Paul, on his journeying to Ephesus, found some people who were trying to lead a Christian life, but whose lives were so dead and utterly useless and had in them so little that was spiritual, that it smote his heart and he said to them: " Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? " They opened their eyes in surprise and said: " We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." When Paul asked them unto what had they been baptized, they said " Unto the baptism of John." That is, they had repented and were trying to get rid of their sins and do God's will, but without any conscious help from above. Paul told them that they had not as yet touched the rudiments of Christ's life. There was no joy, liberty or blessing. They

must have the mighty uplift of the Holy Spirit, the Strength-giver. Under Paul's instruction the Ephesians found it, and their lives were transformed.

Lineal descendants of that Ephesian company are to be found everywhere; their names may even be written down in our church records and they are to be found in our pews Sabbath after Sabbath. Such people say they are trying to live virtuous lives, but it is the life under the law. It is the life of the first mile, not the second. There is no joy in it, no love in it, no abounding life. No greater question could be propounded to you than the question I am now asking—"Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? Has the Spirit of Christ come to rule in your life? Do you know anything about His power to fortify the soul?"

Thomas Hardy, the English novelist, was also a poet, and among his poems he prided himself on one he called *The Impercipient*—one who does not perceive. Jesus knew many such people in His time. "Eyes have they, but they see not," He said. Wordsworth knew a man of whom he said:

> *"A primrose by a river's brim*
> *A yellow primrose was to him,*
> *And it was nothing more."*

But for himself, in his *Ode on Immortality,* he writes:

> *"To me the meanest flower that blows can give*
> *Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."*

Tennyson, with the emphasis of far-reaching thought, exclaims:

> *"Flower in the crannied wall*
> *I pluck you out of the crannies.*
> *I hold you here roots and all in my hand,*
> *Little flower—but if I could understand*
> *What you are, root and all, and all in all,*
> *I should know what God and man is."*

That great wizard of nature, Luther Burbank, knew God's Garden well; but, although he dwelt in it he was so impercipient that he never saw the *Gardener!* A greater naturalist than Burbank, Linnæus, as he walked in his garden, took off his hat as he saw a rose unfold, for he said in that he saw " the footprint of God who was passing that way." In his poem, Hardy chants (perhaps it may have been of himself), as he turns away from the cathedral where his friends are bowed in worship:

> *" With this bright believing band*
> *I have no claim to be.*
> *The faiths by which my comrades stand*
> *Seem fantasies to me."*

One's eyes must be touched by grace in order to see spiritual things. The poet knew that when he said:

> *" The poem hangs on the berry-bush*
> *When comes the poet's eye—*
> *And the whole street's a masquerade*
> *When Shakespeare passes by."*

The Saviour was so insistent upon the coming of this power into the lives of men that He told His disciples that they would be of no use in the world until it came. He would not allow them to go to the great task which He had laid upon them, until they were endued with that power. We do well to remember that the climax of the Christian religion is in the coming of the Holy Spirit. At Christmas Christ was born; at Easter He rose from the dead. But the *Church* itself was born at Pentecost. Even after the Resurrection the disciples were a frightened company. They were trembling behind bolted doors, but after Pentecost how changed! The man who preached on that day, what, in some respects, is the greatest sermon ever preached, was an erstwhile poltroon, liar, and blasphemer. He had been

frightened almost to death by a serving-girl; but after the Holy Spirit came, he was fitted to preach this greatest of all sermons. With him henceforth there would be no questioning, no doubt, but a going to his death for the love he had for his Lord, as a bridegroom might go to meet his bride. And what was true of him, was true of all the rest. They never abated a jot of heart, or hope, or service, until they paid the price of their devotion on the cross or by the headsman's sword, or went to meet their Lord in winding sheets of flame. If the coming of the Holy Spirit was necessary for the *birth* of the Church is it not also necessary for its continued *life?*

There are two words in connection with Pentecost to which I desire to direct attention. The sacred record says: "Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them." As they waited in that upper room they were there with one accord, all differences were laid aside, all selfishness was forgotten. It was an hour of cleansing and purifying. A new force had entered into their lives. We use the word "enthusiasm." What does it mean? It means God in us! We use the word "zeal" to express our devotion. Where did we get that word, and what does it mean? It is from the Greek word "*zeo*" meaning to boil. Wouldn't it be a glorious thing for the Church of God to-day, if it could reach boiling-point in its devotion? At what point does water boil? Well, if at the earth's surface, it boils at 212° Fahrenheit, wouldn't it boil at 150° if it were kept there a long time? The answer is: if you kept it there to all eternity you wouldn't develop steam enough to blow a baby's whistle. But when water reaches boiling-point then steam is almost irresistible and will drive a great Mogul engine with a hundred freight cars, a hundred miles an hour across a continent. It is not otherwise when you reach the boiling-point in life. As a matter of material mathematics, you

might say that two halves equal one whole; but in spiritual mathematics it doesn't work that way. A *thousand* half-hearted Christians are no equal for a single whole-hearted one; or, to be more exact, every half-hearted Christian is a *liability* instead of an asset to the Christian Church. The more she has of them, the worse off she is.

The other word is "power." "Ye shall receive power," said Jesus, "after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." There we have the Greek word "*dunamis*" from which we get our word "dynamite." You can see the power of God in nature, and the marvel of it grows with every passing hour. Our scientists are telling us that there is force enough in a single atom to overwhelm the greatest city, or to lift the fleet that was sunk at Scarpa Flow and put every vessel on the tops of the Trossachs. It is immaterial to God whether He uses that power in nature or in grace. All things are possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are coming now to the nineteen hundredth anniversary of that first Pentecost. Wouldn't it be a glorious thing if it were used by the Christian Church as the occasion of a new evaluation of spiritual truth and life? The churches will be meditating upon this matter for the next few months, and uniting in an effort to make the year 1930 the greatest year of spiritual blessing since that of the first Pentecost. Already the man of mystical mind is singing:

> *"O that it now from heaven might fall*
> *And all my sins consume,*
> *Come Holy Ghost for Thee I call!*
> *Spirit of burning, come!"*

One of the sweetest and noblest of Christian scholars is Dr. William F. Warren, President Emeritus of Boston University, now in his ninety-seventh year. There are few to whom I owe so great a debt as a student as to him; but I

owe him another debt (which I am sure you will be glad to share) for his matchless hymn to the Holy Spirit. May I quote the last stanza?

"I worship thee, Oh Holy Ghost,
I love to worship Thee.
With Thee each day is Pentecost,
Each night, Nativity."

XVI

AN ANCIENT LOVE SONG

And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing.

—I Cor. 13:2.

HERE is a panegyric on love sent to the city of Corinth, where Aphrodite, the Roman Venus, and goddess of love had her greatest temple of effulgent abandon. Corinth is the greatest city in Greece, outstripping Athens in everything except the relics of artistic glory. If you want to see the difference between pagan and Christian morals take down your Greek and Latin authors for this period and read their poems of love. Remember the daughters of the best families became priestesses in heathen temples and led a debauched city into unnameable vices. If you ask whether the world has moved, place the daughters of our own homes over against those of Rome and Corinth in the days of Paul, and you have your answer.

This poem of love floats like a white lily on a turbid stream and sends its holy perfume across the ages. Nowhere in it is there a hint of evil or enervating sentimentality. It is a love song that the world of itself does not sing. We have fallen on times, I have sometimes thought, when the great and holy songs are dying out upon the lips of men and women and our youth. In our endeavour to break away from the staid and conventional, have we not swung too far toward a liberty which has degenerated into

license? Is not music a breeder " as well as a revealer " of character? Is there not danger that that taste which has set aside the holy and classic music of the heart, may also have sacrificed some of the holy things for which it stood? Is it not a good idea for us, in the light of experience, to ask whether ragtime music may not be, in some quarters, the precursor of ragtime morals? Have not law and order and purity and virtue been forgotten, as well as every great rule of the masters of music violated and broken? It would be a sad day if ragtime should take the place of oratorio and symphony.

From weak sentimentality, passionate love song, and all those suggestions which are purely " of the earth, earthy," it is like a breath of mountain air or a vision from some glorious summit to come back to the love song of Paul. Gone and forgotten are the love songs of perfumed Adonis and the white-robed vestal virgins who walked the marble tiles of Aphrodite's court millenniums ago, but this song, 1,800 years old, is still ringing in the hearts of men and women. Nothing purer or holier has been caught up by human minstrelsy or echoed by those tall angels who walk in light with their singing robes about them. It is as clear, pure and beautiful as the Grecian sky under which it saw the light. You cannot blot out a single line without marring its perfection. The Greek had his love feast where he celebrated it most effectually who was longest unconscious at the festal board. The mural paintings left upon the walls of Pompeii tell of Roman debaucheries under the guise of love. The palaces of the Cæsars were reeking with their abominations. They not only harboured the poison-mixer, Locusta, but Paulina and Poppæa set the pace at a time when the Roman matron counted her age by her discarded or discarding lovers. So you see the setting of this pearl of the ages.

We are all lovers of truth, but in our anxiety to propagate it we have often forgotten that which is of far greater value than the simple truth. The words of my text are great teaching, " Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all knowledge." We busy ourselves with solving earth's mysteries; we fret away at the garment of the unknown, thinking we are reducing the number of life's problems, though to tell the truth, there never was a time when in comparison with what we saw to learn we were so ignorant as we are now. There are incalculably more mysteries to-day, in the thinking of men, than there were in the days when Archimedes invented his screw, or the elder atomists argued and marvelled. We have been anxious to get at the truth and if we could not convince our antagonist we were ready to kill him. They put what an old Puritan commentator quaintly calls a " Tyburn tippet " around the necks of heretics and pushed them from the scaffold. We have insisted on an orthodox conception of things, but orthodoxy has always meant my doxy. St. Paul says there is something greater than knowledge.

Again, it is a great thing to know the signs of the times. A business man's success is largely made up by his ability to prophesy. The man who knows the way the tides of trade will set, knows what will happen when certain conditions have been met and what will produce those conditions—the man who knows that, can very easily become a millionaire. But Paul says, " Prophecies fail." They prove to be false, or they are superseded, and you sail by them to the port which lies beyond. Then, if you can understand all mysteries, you can command your price. Edison would want you, Marconi would want you, all the scientists and philosophers would want you, but Paul says there is something better than to understand all mysteries. Paul knew that the Gospel in its innermost genius is an

appeal to the heart, not the intellect. The world has got to be warmed into righteousness, not reasoned into it or driven into it.

We shall have a great deal sweeter and a great deal profounder theology if we do less in the realm of the purely intellectual and more in the realm of the soul, maintaining a more sympathetic closeness with the Master who did little arguing and no fighting, but who cured the sinsick by feeling His way gently and lovingly into that inner and deepest spot which we call the heart, and out of which are the issues of life.

Certainly if anybody knew the value of argumentation, it was Paul. If anybody knew the value of sound doctrine, it was he. So it is particularly interesting when that man insists that love is a better thing than cold thought and that candidacy for heaven in this world or the next is to be effected by the tender realization of the heart, not by rigorous conclusions of the mind. J. G. Holland was right when he wrote long ago:

> *"The heart is wiser than the intellect*
> *And works with swifter hands and surer feet*
> *Toward wise conclusions."*

We talk about Christian unity and we plan to organize it on the basis of a credal statement, but if we ever get church unity it will not be on the basis of a credal statement but on the basis of the thirteenth chapter of Second Corinthians.

Paul said Love was the greatest thing because that was the thing in which the Gospel of Christ was preëminent. All men and women have hearts and love is the same in every heart. Ideals are not the same to every mind. The Oriental has a mind trained to appreciate certain things, the value of which we do not understand. The mind of the

Hindu or the Japanese is quite a different thing from the mind of the Mexican or the American. But Hindu or Japanese or American, each can understand a smile. When our missionary women smile on a little girl in Japan it is not necessary to translate that smile into Japanese. You cannot convince a certain type of mind by argument and you cannot force a will by compulsion, but you can get the assent of the intellect and the following of the will through love, and love is the only influence that will work an adequate result. How beautifully Knowles, the New England poet, puts it in his poem, "*Love Triumphant*":

"Helen's lips are drifting dust;
Ilion is consumed with rust;
All the galleons of Greece
Drink the ocean's dreamless peace;
Lost was Solomon's purple show
Restless centuries ago;
Stately empires wax and wane
Babylon, Barbary and Spain
Only one thing, undefaced
Lasts, though all the worlds lie waste
And the heavens are overturned.
Dear, how long ago we learned!

There's a light that blinds the sun,
Sound that lives when sounds are done,
Music that rebukes the birds,
Language lovelier than words,
Hue and scent that shame the rose,
Wine no earthly vineyard knows,
Silence stiller than the shore
Swept by Charon's stealthy oar,
Ocean more divinely free
Than Pacific's boundless sea
Ye who love have learned it true.
Dear, how long ago we knew!"

Bear in mind that the love to which the Apostle refers is not the love which the Greek meant when he used the word

"phileo" nor the kind of love which the god Eros symbolized, the purely physical and lustful. It is love which hallows all human fellowships. If John had said it we might not have marvelled so much but when it comes from Paul, the logician, how impressive it becomes. You will notice that this was written as a message to the Church at Corinth, but it is a message to the whole world. Let it ring everywhere; let us think of it in all our intercourse. It is our hates and our fears which make cowards of us all. The standing armies of the world are to-day greater than they were before the World War. We spent $187,000,000,000 on that war, $20,000 an hour, somebody has figured out, every hour since Christ was born. There are 20,000,000 graves that ought not to have been; there are 9,000,000 orphans and 5,000,000 widows—all for lack of love. In our economic life things are little better. Why should masses and classes have each other by the throat? Why should America have 3,000 strikes a year? Hate will die out among the nations and among the classes when it dies out among the individuals and not before. So I have all classes of men in thought and the peace of the world as a background when I ask you to listen to this poem of love which rises clearer than ever to-day in spite of the wars and hates. You recall Markham's words—

> *"He drew a circle which shut me out,*
> *Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;*
> *But love and I had the wit to win,*
> *We drew a circle that took him in."*

In our work in the church we may be enthusiastic, we may be able to drive through some good scheme as a promoter, or a church official, or a pastor; there may be endless activity, but without love, it is nothing. Hear the way the Apostle unfolds this idea—"If I bestow all my goods to

feed the poor." I suppose if a man had done that in any age he would have been canonized. But Paul says even that is nothing without love. "Though I give my body to be burned"—When Paul wrote that they had not begun the long procession of those who mounted to heaven by way of the stake and fagot, but it was to come. But even that passage says that doing with dogged will and determination will not amount to anything if there is no love behind it. "Love suffereth long and is kind." What wonderful verses these are! You know people who suffer long, but they are ugly. You know people who have said, "I will forgive this time but no more." The Christian love is superior to any other kind in that it "suffereth long and is *kind*"! It is *Love* that never ends. It was a beautiful example which Robert Louis Stevenson showed the world when he settled at Samoa where the islands were ablaze with strife. He visited chiefs in prison and lavished his kindness upon the islanders, and made himself the friend of all. He had to live on the hilltop in order to live at all, but the natives built a road to his house to make the ascent easy. They called it "the road to the loving heart." They made a beaten path from their own door to the heart that loved them all. The world is doing that to-day for Him who said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

"Love vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up." There is a beatitude which you often hear—"Blessed is he who bloweth his own horn, for it shall be well-blown." The little we do seems to us so great; anything which elevates us above our fellows, we long for and covet. But when the love of Christ constrains us, how all that disappears. Then we do not behave ourselves unseemly, we do not seek our own at the cost of another. "Love beareth all things." You know what a mother or father will bear for a child,

but even these sometimes come to an end, but the love of which the Apostle sings had its cradle in the heart of God. It is the seventy times seven which it proclaims and hallows. " When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up! "

What an omnipotent clause this is—" Believeth *all* things, hopeth *all* things, endureth *all* things." Love *never* faileth. That's too much of a theme for twenty minutes! Take this chapter when the hour is over and meditate upon it yourself. I have only opened the gate into a marvelous paradise. Love *never* faileth. Sometimes it looks as if it *had* failed, for individuals and for the world, but the world's day is not yet over, the final curtain has not dropped.

" When the last day is ended and the nights are through
When the last sun is buried in its grave of blue,
When the stars are snuffed like candles,
And the seas no longer fret,
When the winds have lost their cunning,
And the storms forget,
When the last lip is palsied
And the last prayer said,
Love shall reign immortal
While the worlds lie dead."

XVII

RELIGION—A HELP OR A HINDRANCE?

For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.—MATT. 11: 30.

JESUS was an out-of-doors Man. Largely, the lessons of His sermons were drawn from the fields. He had stood on the white chalk cliffs of Nazareth, and watched the oxen as they drew the plow through the fertile fields of the plain of Esdraelon, or the thinner soil of the hillsides of Nazareth. He knew that a yoke was put upon the necks of the oxen, not to increase their burden, but to make their task easier. It is this thought which gives point to the Saviour's word—"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take *My* yoke upon you and learn of Me . . . for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Did He tell the truth when He said that the religion which He came to bring to men made earth's burdens lighter? Or does it become a yoke which galls the neck of men, and a burden which we are unable to bear with any degree of comfort? I admit that the world, at least by its attitude, has affirmed that religion is an irksome thing. It is said that its conception of God is a constant threat; that by it, He appears as an angry judge or a great policeman, eager to arrest the thoughtless offender and hurry him to condemnation. It is said, moreover, that men have always been burdened by their religion. The heathen had sacrifices innumerable. He never went to battle without importuning his gods over a smoking altar. He found his gods narrow, and vindictive, and hard to please.

Now Jesus nowhere countenances such an attitude toward God. He reveals Him as a Father, of infinite patience and love, who would not that any should perish but, that all should have eternal life, who watches even the birds, "small almoners of heaven," who, as once He said, fall not unregarded, as evidence of the yearning of the heart of God. "He that hath seen Me," He said, "hath seen the Father." He declared that such a conception of God would hold men steadfast under all circumstances; that such a thought of God would so enchain and enrapture them that they could not be turned away from their high and noble purpose; that they who followed in His footsteps, revealed the fact to the world that their religion was underneath them as a mighty support, holding them up through all disaster, even sending them to the lions with hallelujahs, and hastening to meet the flames with as eager a spirit as a king would go to his coronation.

Again, socially, men have considered that religion laid heavy burdens upon them. The ordinary cares of business life were hard enough, but religion tended to make them harder. Standards which would pass in the street, men would be ashamed to own in the closet. What they would advocate before men, they would be speechless about, when face to face with God. So true is all this that men are constantly discussing this question: Can a man be a Christian and a successful business man at one and the same time?

In social and community life, too, religion is said to multiply our anxieties. The Christian mother feels a sense of responsibility infinitely greater than she who is oblivious to the requirements of God. A mother with no standards but those of society, may be comparatively indifferent as to the moral attitude of her children and concern herself alone with their dress and manners and education; but the Chris-

tian mother and father face a standard of a different sort which their religion has set up. They hear God say, as Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses, "Take this child and train him for Me and I will give thee thy wages." What, then, is to be said about religion for a man in business or for a mother as she faces her responsibility? This, plainly: that religion helps a man to do business on the only basis that will stand the test of time. So great an expert as Roger Babson is saying that religion furnishes the great underlying principles on which alone business can be successful. The man who makes honesty a policy will, some day, be found to be, at heart, as dishonest as selfishness can make him. It is the man who makes honesty a *principle* who will triumph at the last.

And how about the mother who feels that she has a high commission from Almighty God? Does not her love for God make her love for the child a holier thing? Does it not lift for her the low dome of time, and let in the great light of eternity? Does she not go to her task with higher resolves and greater joy backed by an eternal hope? Is she not made impervious to the attacks of selfishness and secularity? Does not history prove that such mothers as Augustine, Wesley, Lincoln, Ruskin and Gladstone knew, have been, after all, the salvation of the world? With such lives before them, faith in all things good comes easy and though a man may fall he cannot blind his eyes with clay. There is nothing on earth that makes such noble womanhood as religion and the testimony which was wrung from heathen historians two thousand years ago, has illumined every page of history since—"What women these Christians have!"

Again: religion has seemed to add to the cares of men by introducing what the world calls exacting and annoying tasks. A Christian is exhorted to pray and the man of

heathen spirit says, "How irksome all this business of getting out of bed a little earlier in the morning or staying out of bed a little later at night, to commune with God, is! Could anything be less inviting?" Then there is the whole question of worship. To deny oneself ease and enjoyment and go to the house of God and to accept the responsibility which goes with worship—what a burden all *that* is! To feel obliged to read out of an old Book on whose pages the ink dried more than eighteen centuries ago; to feel obliged to memorize its verses and to listen to its expounding,—what an infringement of personal liberty! And then the Church itself,—so much work to be done, so many causes to be supported, so much money to be expended, which might be given to personal ease or enjoyments or amusements." All this, and more, is brought as an indictment by the heathen spirit against religion.

But what, after all, *are* the facts in the case? *Is* prayer a burden? Ask the man who prays! He, if anybody, ought to know about that. Ask him who has felt his burden drop from his shoulders, and a divine light shine into his darkened soul! The testimony of unnumbered ages stands written, so that it cannot be blotted out. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles." We have seen those who were dead in trespasses and sins enter into a new life; we have seen the publican convicted of his sins smiting his breast and crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" We have seen him, in answer to his prayer, go down to his house justified; we have seen the widow lift her head in holy triumph and go on her journey with a smile, because the God of the widow and the fatherless had heard her cry. We have seen the fetters of sin broken, and a man once a slave to all evil, become free. Prayer a burden! Long ago a great poet said:

" More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. . . ."

The Bible an irksome thing, and its reading a disagreeable task! Why, it is the Word of God, and He who inspired it said, " The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Every man who has carefully studied it is fain to say, " Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." It is the most marvelous book of the ages. It is marvelous in its literary values, but infinitely more marvelous in its spiritual power.

Is it a task to worship? When our morgues and prisons and insane asylums have been full; when men have gone crazy and were without hope in the world, the Christian has said, " O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Infidelity has never been able to silence that cry. We are fallen on times when men seem to think that they can get along without worship. They will find before the curtain rings down that they are mistaken. Augustine was right when he said, " Thou hast made us for Thyself, and the soul is restless until it rests in Thee."

There is a story of some Indians on their reservation who were told that they must not plant or cultivate their corn on Sunday, or they would not get half a crop. In sheer obstinacy they planted the corn on Sunday and gave it twice the usual attention, also on Sunday, and, in the end, had twice the usual harvest. Where the crop failed was not in the harvest-field, but in the Indian; and any man who thinks he can beat the Almighty and do defiance to that spirit of worship which is inborn in the soul, will find, before the curtain falls, that he has made a mistake. Esau got a mess of pottage, but he lost his birthright; and what shall it profit a man, if he make a dollar but atrophy his soul?

And the Church! Is *that* also a burden resting upon society and making life more difficult and strenuous? Why, the Church is the centre of life's holiest experiences, the conserver of morality and truth without which the world would be undone. If it were known that any city had repudiated the Church, and that for which the Church stands, they could not borrow a dollar in the markets of the world. Babson has been bold enough to say that the great requisite for business is faith and prayer and the Holy Spirit. The Church is the one agency on the face of the earth that traffics in the eternities, that brings men and God together. It is the place where little children learn to lisp His name who said, " Of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is the place where loving hearts seek the holiest bonds that human hearts can know; and we halt the sacred dust of those we love a little time at God's Altar, before we carry it out to God's Acre. We wait there long enough to hear Him say, " I am the resurrection and the life; whoso liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." So we go from the graveyard refreshed and strengthened by the holy message which first came to the world across the open tomb of the Man of Nazareth, " He is not here, He is risen." It is this for which the Church stands. I know her history and her mistakes. I know that, at times, she has inverted her torch and almost put out its light in the ashes of her own wrongdoing; but in any age of the world's history, she has been the whitest thing alive! There was no other moral agency to dispute her supremacy, and her rejuvenation came not from without, but from within. There was always a saving remnant, a few names in Sardis that had not defiled their garments, and through them she came to fulfil the function which God had given her, to be in some sense, at least, the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

The world is too much with us. The tasks which are

laid upon us by selfish ambitions and human competitions are too great to be borne alone and religion makes us able to carry all burdens with ease; or, to change the figure, it is the way in which we rise above our dead selves to nobler things; and as the bird flies with as much ease over the rugged mountains as over the fertile plains, so, with the blessed support of our holy religion, we are lifted up on wings as eagles and look down with quiet confidence on the rugged pathways of life.

Religion a burden? Christ said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Religion was such a glorious, victorious thing, that the great Apostle could say, "I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in *me*." It is the God-life moving the soul, casting out all fear, giving the sense of holy triumph, conquering by God's help all temptations and making this world, so full of things we dread, the glorious vestibule of the Kingdom Eternal, and our every footfall accompanied by the footprints of our Lord. Some there be, who have echoed the jaded skepticism of Matthew Arnold—

> *"The sea of faith*
> *Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore*
> *Lay like the fold of a bright girdle furled;*
> *But now I only hear*
> *Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar*
> *Retreating to the breath*
> *Of the night-winds, down the vast edges drear*
> *And naked shingles of the world."*

But to him whose heart is steadied by faith, all that is empty sound. He is able to affirm the glorious declaration of the Apostle—"This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith."

Among the heavenly bodies there are two with which we are most familiar and intimately concerned. One we call the Earth. Through long processes, which science herself

cannot measure, chaos was changed to cosmos, and the earth, finally, carpeted with green. Its valleys laughed into abundant harvests, and its hillsides were crowned with forests and flowers and a multitudinous life disported itself in joy and satisfaction. The other planet, we call the Moon. As it rides out yonder in the heavens, it puts a bit into the mouth of our tides, and drives them up and down our sands of gold; but for itself it is dead. It has neither tree nor flower, bud nor blossom. There is no life upon it. There never will be. How came it to such a sad estate? Æons ago it gave up its atmosphere. It takes atmosphere to change rocks to soil, to bring life to tree and flower. The moon will trundle on its way until it melts with fervent heat, and scatters its dust where once it shone, a dead and useless thing.

We have seen men in similar case: one rejoices in a life which rains down its ripened fruit to bless the lives of men, enriched by the showers of God's grace. It is fruitful and beautiful and useful. Another life has given up its atmosphere; it has no sense of God's presence, no aspiration for the things of the spirit, no breath of God moves upon it—it is a dead and useless thing. Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." If it be true, that "In Him we live and move and have our being," it must also be true, that out of Him, without Him, we languish and die.

Religion is the life of God in the souls of men. It is fellowship with the divine and no man can fulfil the full purpose of his life without it. It gives strength to the weak, and wisdom to the erring. It is not a load but a lift.

XVIII

WHAT ABOUT PRAYER?

Behold he prayeth.—Acts 9: 11.

WE are just finding out the vast power of the hitherto undiscovered forces of nature. What we thought was a void above us, has proven to be the home of immeasurable forces. Sir Oliver Lodge dwells upon the vast powers which nature holds in leash, but he also says that however great may be the unused forces of nature the unused forces of prayer are infinitely greater. If that be true, we certainly ought to realize that power, for the world's need is unspeakably great.

As I travel across the country and see great buildings from the car window, I ask the conductor, " What are those buildings? "

" An insane asylum," he frequently answers. People are scared to death. Our insane asylums and our morgues are full. In to-morrow's paper you will find the story of some man or woman who could not stand the gaff,—refused to play the game of life any longer—so jumped out of a window, or put a bullet through the brain, or swallowed poison. But as for me, when my burdens are greater than I can stand, instead of being a victim of despair—instead of losing heart and mind and hope—I will go and pray.

In the story of which my text is a part of the record, there is evidence of a changed heart. Saul of Tarsus, from breathing hatred against the Church, had come at last to pray. As Christians I suppose the first question we ought

to ask ourselves is, " What was the testimony and practice of Jesus concerning prayer? " He was the poorest sleeper and the greatest prayer of the ages. We are told that He continued " all night in prayer." Again, it is a great while before day " He arose to pray." The shingly beach of the Sea of Galilee knew Him well and the shadows of the rock lay upon Him as He prayed in the fastnesses of the mountain. All the great events of His life were nourished and unfolded in prayer. It was in prayer that He conquered His temptations in the mountains of Quarantania. He was transformed in prayer before He was transfigured on the Mount. There is nothing but prayer from which a man comes transfigured. He may come victorious from battle with the stains of the blood of his enemies upon his hands; in a contest for supremacy he may strike down his antagonist, but every advantage for himself is a bitter loss for those from whom he wrested it. But when a man prays—that is a story of another sort. In that experience a man gains a victory of quite another kind—a victory for himself and for his enemy as well.

Who is it that is praying? Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary and Son of God! The One who held the waves in the hollow of His hand and could strip them of their foam by a single word. The One who said He had legions of angels sufficient to palsy every Roman legion and strike their banners from their impotent hands. The One who could heal the blind and the lame and the leper, and conquer death itself. When we are in need, we are quite inclined to charge God foolishly and to hide from trouble in the grave of a suicide; but He whose enemies were legion, who was as poor as any of us, who was hated more than the worst of us, and whose hands were spiked at last to a cross, but who, with those spiked hands has proved Himself able to lift a world, crosses and all, and who glows in the light

of the ages like a tropic sun—this Man, prays! In Gethsemane He won His final victory by prayer. Listen as Sidney Lanier wraps himself in his singing robes:

"Into the woods my Master went
Clean forespent, forespent,
Into the woods my Master came
Forespent with love and shame.
* * * * *
"Out of the woods my Master went
And he was well content,
Out of the woods my Master came
Content with death and shame."

So even in the life of Jesus Christ we see the transformation which prayer can make. It is of prayer that Tennyson is talking when he says,

"For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Long ago the Christian mystic sang:

"Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give
Long as they live should Christians pray
They learn to pray when first they live."

The sailor on the sea, the traveler in the wilderness, the sinner burdened with his sins, the mourner looking into a newly made grave—all these cry, "Let us pray," and in the act of prayer the fashion of their countenance is changed.

There is nothing about which there seems to be greater misunderstanding, both among its friends and its enemies than the matter of prayer. The men of the generation just passed may remember how Professor Tyndall offered a scientific prayer-test, but which was so unscientific that scientists themselves acknowledged its crassness and futility.

One feels at times that prayer suffers quite as much in the hands of its friends. There are many good Christians who seem to think that prayer is teasing God to do something you would like to have Him do, without regard to His own wisdom in the matter. In my youth I heard the saints quote, " The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The impression made upon my mind was, that if you could make up your mind hard enough and stick to it long enough, you could bring God around to your terms. To the man who says, " What is the use of praying if you cannot get what you want," perhaps the best answer is, " You do not know what you want, much less what you ought to have. Only God knows. Why don't you *ask* Him instead of *telling* Him? "

" There are some things that I know I want," some one says. What are they?

" Well, first, I want money. Poverty brings so many temptations, I want money that I may never know the burden of being poor."

Are you quite sure you want money? Jesus said the temptations of poverty were nothing in comparison with those of riches. He said that a rich man had about as good a chance to get into heaven as a camel had to go through a needle's eye. " How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." Heavy indeed are the keys that hang at the rich man's girdle. Somebody has said that you can see what God thinks of money when you take notice of some whom He allows to have it. Yet with more than an even chance that it will ruin your soul, you still pray for money!

" Well, at least, I want success."

" How do you know you do? Solomon had success and see what he did with it. Are you sure you would do any better? It is not the song of the victor but the song of the

conquered that has made music for the ages. Who were the victors?

" The Martyrs or Nero? The Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,
Or the Persians or Xerxes? His judges or Socrates, Pilate or Christ? "

About everybody who has amounted to anything in the world has died poor, and most of them condemned by the men of their time. As we look over the ages, we find that those who walked a path of disappointment hot enough to blister their feet are the men whom the world counts the victors, and yet you are asking for success as the world counts it.

" At least I want health and strength."

How do you know you do? Samson had both and see what he did with them. Are you sure you would do any better? Do you know the story of Homer, or Milton, or Edward Payson or Frances Ridley Havergal? Fanny Crosby used to say it was the loss of her sight that saved her soul, and Helen Keller, deaf, dumb and blind, has said that the greatest calamity may be God's bridge to the Promised Land. St. Paul himself wanted health but prayed for it in vain. God denied his petition, to answer his prayer in a greater way than he could have imagined when He said, " My grace is sufficient for thee." We are urged to pray for health, but before we can do that to any advantage we ought to settle what we are going to do with our health when we get it. The great question is not how long a life we may have, but how good and useful our life shall be.

" Well, at least, I want the lives of my dear ones spared to me."

How do you know you do? It was only yesterday that

mothers were sending their sons over seas and praying that their lives might be spared, but how could they tell whether their sons' death might not help to redeem a lost world. I have seen a father and mother praying in agony that the life of their child might be spared, and I have seen that child become a driveling idiot. I have seen father and mother praying for the life of a child who later became a menace to society and expiated his crimes in the electric chair, while his parents went to the grave of the broken-hearted. Hadn't you better preface your prayers, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt"? Hadn't you better ask God to do what will be best both for your dear ones and for you?

"If when I kneel to pray
With eager lips I say:
'Lord give me all the things that I desire
Health, wealth, fame, friends, brave heart, religious fire,
The power to sway my fellow men at will
And strength for mighty work to banish ill'—
In such a prayer as this
The blessing I must miss.

* * * * *

But if I lowly fall
And thus in faith I call:
'Through Christ, O Lord, I pray Thee give to me
Not what I would but what seems best to Thee,
Of life, of health, of service and of strength
Until to Thy full joy I come at length'—
My prayer shall then avail
The blessing shall not fail."

What, then, is prayer? I answer, prayer is, first of all, the practice of the presence of God. The heart and essence of prayer is communion with Him,—to change eyes with Him,—to think His thoughts after Him. If you will not misunderstand me, I will say, Prayer is an attitude of the soul before it is a petition on the lips. I do not tell God what He must do, I ask Him what He wants me to do. The

answer to prayer is not in a handful of gifts, but in a changed countenance. If it was true, as men have said, that one could not stop for five minutes under a stoop on a rainy day with Edmund Burke without feeling that he stood in the presence of the greatest mind in Europe, how will a man feel who consorts with God, who feels his own soul in harmony with the Divine, who hushes the voice of his querulous complaining to listen to the voice of infinite love? Then he can sing:

> *"I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou*
> *Shouldst lead me on,*
> *I loved to choose and see my path, but now*
> *Lead thou me on."*

I am not saying that you should not talk with God about everything. You can pray about the weather, or your health, or your fortune, or anything else, but remember the initiative is not with you but with Him. If you are in harmony with Him and His Spirit, no doubt your prayer whatever may be its object will be in harmony with His will and therefore be answered. But do not ask God to abdicate His throne that you may take His place. Do not impose your ignorance upon divine wisdom. Why should you want a second best, when you can have the first best? Why should you desire your own way when His way is infinitely better? We hold our heads between our hands and at last in utter agony exclaim, "Thy will be done!" What else would we want to have done? Why not at the very beginning, with a happy, joyous cry, say, "*Thy* will be done!" it is the only thing worth doing; it is the only thing worth having. We ought to speak of it with glad assurance.

So the effect of prayer is not an accumulation of gifts in earthly storehouses, but the attitude of mind which says,

" Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Why should you ask for a single blessing when you can have the Blesser Himself? The greatest gift that ever fell out of the assenting heaven is the gift of God Himself. Nothing can be quite so wonderful as communion with God. To talk with Him as friend talketh with friend. An old Puritan preacher has said, " We are like wanton boys who pull a door-bell and run away, but he who hath business waiteth till the Master comes." If you are talking with God do not hang up the receiver until God talks back. If you can hear Him say, " Thou art My son, I love thee," you can go in the strength of it forty days in the wilderness, if you have to, and your strength will not fail! Then you will feel, in spiritual things, as Keats describes the intellectual vision:

" Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

This, then, is true—Prayer is the practice of the presence of God. " They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." So it comes about that prayer clears the vision, steadies the nerves, defines duty, sweetens the spirit, sanctifies the soul, and makes all things possible to him whose life is hid with Christ in God.

XIX

WHAT ABOUT HEAVEN?

For our citizenship is in heaven.—PHILIPPIANS 3: 20.

IN MOFFATT'S translation our text is beautifully supplemented as follows: " But we are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body that belongs to our lowly estate till it resembles the Body of His Glory, by the same power that enables Him to make everything subject to Himself." It is years possibly since you read a sermon about heaven and that is why I have included one in this volume. When Thoreau was dying, Pillsbury asked him, " What about the next world? " and the great naturalist answered, " One world at a time, please." That certainly indicates the attitude of very many people. Having all they can attend to, in the things which are in this world, why worry about the next? The interesting thing about these two worlds—the life which now is and that which is to come—is that in reality they are not two, but one. They are so bound together that you cannot separate them; and, when it comes to a matter of fact, I have found out, through long experience, that those who have their eye on the future life make the best use of the life which now is.

You will frequently hear it said that Jesus did not have much to say about the future life; but if you will turn to your concordance you will find that the Gospels, which record His sayings, contain " heaven " and " heavenly " three times as often as they do " earth " and " earthly."

In the last and most important interview which Jesus had with His disciples, as John records it, there was little else talked about. "In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you" was the substance of it all.

If our citizenship is in heaven, and if we are really only passing through an alien land on our way to it, it would seem sensible to talk about it and prepare for the great culmination. Before I give you the message of the only One who can speak authoritatively about that future life and all its implications, may I ask you to stand with me for a little at the door of a chamber where a life, unmatched for wisdom in all the ancient world, is about to terminate.

It is four centuries before the advent of our Lord, but the same thought which He expressed is in the mind of Socrates. We are listening at the prison door of that great man, of whom his jailer said, "He was the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place." (I am quoting from the *Phædo* of Plato.) The respite for the condemned man is over. The sacred ship has come back from Delos: the Eleven have loosed his chains. His friends are about him, spending their last hours with him. Listen to what he says: "I am going to another place. It is very meet for me to be thinking and talking of the nature of that pilgrimage which I am about to make. What can I do better, in the interval between this and the setting sun?" I recommend that attitude to any man whether his sun has passed its meridian, or is still climbing the sky. Listen to this man's faith—even in the world's twilight: "I ought to be grieved at death," he says, "if I were not persuaded that I am going to other gods who are wise and good, of which I am as certain as I can be of any such matters. I have good hope that there is something remaining for the dead; and, as has

been said of old, some far better thing for the good than for the evil." After his long argument for immortality is over, he proceeds to tell how those "who have been preëminent for holiness of life go to their pure home which is above, in mansions which may not be described, and of which the time would fail me to tell." "Seeing all these things, what ought not we to do that we may obtain virtue and wisdom in this life?" He goes on, "Fair is the price and the hope great! The venture is a glorious one and one ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale." "When I have drunk the poison I shall leave you, and go to the joys of the blessed." So, with a smile, he lifted the fatal cup.

It is four hundred years later, and One infinitely greater than Socrates is saying to His friends almost the same things, "In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus of Nazareth spoke with such assurance and great complacency about the city in which He felt so much at home, that He called it "My Father's house." I confess I cannot understand that spirit which makes light of an existence which, if immortality is true, all men are hastening toward as fast as the sweeping years can carry them, and which is to last forever. I agree with Ian Maclaren, when he says, "One must be afflicted with spiritual stupidity or cursed with incurable frivolity who has never thought of that new state on which he may any day enter, nor speculated concerning its conditions." Again and again, by parable and otherwise, Jesus sought to present to the minds of His disciples both the certainty of that future life and the principles which held sway there. "My Father's house"—how sweetly suggestive that is! It ought to take away from our hearts any foreboding, and make us properly impatient for the home-going—in God's good time.

Concerning our earthly home, we have most of us felt a strange longing when years and distance have separated us from those we love. Emerson's Ode has always been a favourite of mine:

> *" Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home,*
> *Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine,*
> *Long through thy weary crowds I roam*
> *A river ark on ocean's brine,*
> *Long I've been tossed like driven foam,*
> *But now, proud world, I'm going home."*

Nothing could be quite so rapturous for some of us, as to find that the desolations which the years have wrought, were only a dream. If we could find the old home once more, as it used to be, half of you would spring up, this minute, and say, with a bounding heart, " I am going home! " We all agree with the great French writer that the saddest thing in life is its eternal flux. Nothing abides, nothing seems good enough to last forever. But if there be such a thing as another Home, where the old folks and the children are, and there will be no further mutations, it ought to cause every last reader of mine to thrill with unspeakable expectancy. Emerson has said, " Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it shall rejoin its fellow, and it will be content and cheerful alone, for a thousand years."

I quite agree with the old mystics who used to talk about " a heaven to go to heaven in." I am a firm believer in the blessed fact that heaven comes down to earth and dwells in the lives of men. But I also believe in a future, an eternal existence, in the fellowship of the saints, in the perpetuation of life's powers and loves. Paul spoke of " the life that now is and of that which is to come " as if they were really parts of the same whole. What we are here, we shall continue to be there. I believe there are two things which we carry with us into another world—*character*

and *capacity*. We spend a lifetime in the training of our capacities and I have always felt that the God who is careful to preserve the print of a raindrop for millions of years, who sees to it that no atom of matter is destroyed and no force wasted, will see to it that our capacities find ample scope in that life which is to come. I am glad to believe that that life will not be so different from this present one as we sometimes imagine. If one knows the essential elements of moral and spiritual perfection in this world, I believe he also knows what is the outline and substance of heaven. Paul tells us that flesh and blood cannot inherit it, and he speaks of a *spiritual body*. That is a frail craft in which to carry a great idea into the sea of thought and the freight tears the craft to pieces. A spiritual *body*,—an absolute contradiction of terms. Spirit and body are antithetical. To say that the body is made of " immaterial material " is to utter a statement too deep for us to understand. Here in this world we find that our surroundings are made to match our needs. The eye and the light go together; the air and the lungs were made for each other; without the ear there is no sound. So in the future life, being and environment must go together. Life is an adjustment to one's surroundings, and that must hold in all worlds.

I have said, in substance, that the first meaning of heaven, to me, is a state of character rather than a place of residence. It means *to be* something, rather than *to go* somewhere. But I also believe that while heaven does mean a state of character, it also means a place, if you can use that word in connection with spiritual being. *Jesus* used it, if we accept the record of John, and I leave it there. I have no disposition to try to eliminate it.

The Revelator gives us a wonderful vision. It was the best he could do, trying to fashion material things to spir-

itual conceptions. One never-to-be-forgotten evening I climbed the hills above Nazareth and saw the sun lave its glowing face in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. In that glorious sunset I saw what John saw, of ruby and emerald and chrysophrase, of pearl and gold and sapphire. He was looking at the same sea that I was looking at, and all he had to do was to paint what he saw. It was fine to think of a land where the leaves of the trees were full of healing, where costly gems were like pebbles on the beach, and beaten gold was spread out for sidewalks. But in this world I notice that breasts heave with pain under the finest silk as well as under calico; that hate, and misery, and heartache stalk up marble steps and tread Persian carpets as readily as in the bare chambers of the poor. What makes heaven is not any setting of gold or gems, but those fellowships which are eternal and the seamless robe of Christ's righteousness.

Men have dreamed that some planet at the centre of things, around which all suns revolved, was heaven. I know nothing about that. It may be that heaven is all around us, and that our dear ones are with us, that " unperceived they mix in the throng." You can speculate about that as much as you choose, but there are a few things which, it seems to me, heaven must mean.

First, the supreme joy of heaven is its Beatific Vision of Christ our Lord! Some of your eyes will drop at that, and I suppose it is a fact that altogether too few of us love God well enough yet to desire *Him* above all things. If we would honestly confess it, we have more desire to see our friends than to see Him, and to get a welcome from some who kept company with us here would gladden our hearts more than the welcome of the Son of God. But, " He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." He will not chide us that we cherish the love which

was lavished on the seen, and care for the brother whom we knew. Perhaps we shall have to wait for the first hour of heaven in order to be shown that it was He who gave us all human loves and fashioned our hearts to throb with their delight.

Secondly, heaven will be a sinless land. All those on earth who love the pure, the good, the true, the brave, the noble, the self-sacrificing, will be there. Flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom, so the sins of the flesh never enter. To think of a land and a fellowship where there is no hatred, no jealousy, no ill temper, no selfishness, no emulations and animosities! Ah, how sweet it would be, to be in a land where no bitter word was ever spoken and no unkind deed was ever done! We have longed for these things but have never seen them. One day, please God, they shall be real. We shall desire to do only the good. No evil example shall confront or confound us, and from centre to circumference there will be nothing but holiness and love and God.

Thirdly, heaven will be a place in which there will be no sorrow. This world is a world of tears. In heaven, they shall be wiped away. This is a world of losses and crosses, of bitter sufferings that seem to bring no reward. I know we often say we could never be happy in heaven if we knew of the suffering of our friends on earth, or if we saw our dear ones going astray. I will not attempt to discuss that question except by suggesting that if that be true we shall be under the same conditions that God Himself is, and we shall know His yearning and enter into the fellowship of whatever suffering He may have. We shall know sorrow only as God knows it, and it may be we shall have a hand with God in the relieving of it, and that will be a glorious experience for the human, the angelic, or the divine.

So, positively, there will be something to do in heaven.

When, on one occasion, Henry Ward Beecher was walking with his friend, Dr. Lyman, in Greenwood Cemetery, Beecher said, " Well, Lyman, I suppose they will be bringing me out before very long and leaving me here. But God knows I won't stay here! " " Where shall we look for you, Mr. Beecher? " asked Lyman. " Somewhere, doing business for God," was the reply. When we are weary with the struggles of life, we cry out for cessation. We long for the land " where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." When they asked a scrubwoman as to her idea of heaven, her reply was, " To wear a white apron and sing psalms." Why not? One of the great bishops of another generation, his stalwart frame shaken to pieces by the awful pangs of disease, which rendered him a lonely and suffering man, cried out, as he thought of the wife from whom death had separated him for many years, " When I get to heaven I should like to rest for a thousand years with my head in the lap of my Mary! " But heaven is not the Christian's Nirvana. What errands it has, I do not know. What supreme service it may ask, I cannot tell. The Scriptures tell us that there " His servants shall serve Him." What sweet ministries it may hold we know not. Enough for us that they will be God-given. It is not difficult to believe that somewhere in the boundless universe of God there will be ample scope for all our endeavour, that all our holy impulses to love and serve will find abundant outlet in glorious ministries.

But, you are asking me, what is our relation to kindred spirits in that blessed life? "Assure us of that," you say, " and we shall be happy." The Bible has something to say about the limitations or absolute cessations of certain forms of earthly fellowships. " They neither marry nor are given in marriage," said Jesus, but a little thought will discover that that declaration says nothing about the essence of

love's holy fellowship. For that fellowship no earthly ordinance is necessary. Heart must evermore gravitate to heart, and earthly fellowships will come to full blossom and glory in the atmosphere of heaven. Love is eternal. We shall know as we are known, and love will claim its own. To find our own, to know them at their best, where no word shall ever be spoken to start a tear, where no separation will ever come, where the old grow young again, where together we may listen at the feet of Jesus or go on errands of holy service—that will be unspeakably glorious. There the mysteries of God in nature and in grace may be made known to us; there all our hopes may be realized and every holy ambition satisfied; our reverent curiosity shall lead us into the wondrous unfolding of His mystery, and on every side we shall find the smile of His face and know the arching of His love. That is heaven. Let us begin it here, and continue it forever! This is the fulness of love, and love *never* faileth! So we sing with Bernard of Cluny:

"For thee O dear, dear Country
Mine eyes their vigil keep
For very love beholding
Thy happy name they weep.
The mention of thy glory
Is unction to the breast
And medicine in sickness
And love and life and rest."

XX

GOD'S MEMORIALS

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—I SAMUEL 7: 12.

THE profoundest questions in the entire sphere of religious interests are these: Is there a God? Does He reveal Himself to men? If so, how? The Bible itself takes the question of God for granted, and does not undertake a laboured argument in defense of affirmation. It begins with the stately words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In his great sermon to the Athenians on Mars Hill, Paul stated clearly his idea of the immanence of God and said, "In Him we live and move and have our being." He also quoted the words of Aratus, one of their own poets, to justify his affirmation. If men have not seen God's face, they have insisted that they have at least caught a glimpse of the splendour of His garments, and through all ages, men have believed in His existence and His fellowship with men. The Psalmist says, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shalt thou behold me." Clement of Alexandria believed in a Christ whom he worshipped as Eternal Wisdom, Wisdom become incarnate in the world, and whose existence is recognized. He insisted that He was everywhere present in the lives of men as perfume in the flowers and salt in the waters of the sea. Clement was the father of Alexandrian theology and the twentieth century must needs hark back to the second, for a statement of the Fatherhood of God, which we have not been able to surpass.

In our own land, Benjamin Franklin stood up in the

Constitutional Convention, May 1777, and moved that the Convention be opened with prayer. He said, "If a sparrow cannot fall without God's knowledge, how can an empire rise without His aid?" There is profound theology in the thrilling couplet of Tennyson:

"Speak to Him now for He heareth, and spirit with spirit may meet.
Nearer is He than breathing, closer than hands and feet."

Nothing could be more impressive in the unfolding of the lives of men, than this idea of the immanence of God. It is only those who realize that immanence, who feel that every common bush is aflame with God, and take off their sandals in the dusty ways of life saying, "Surely God is in this place."

Poets, prophets and the children of nature lie closest to the heart of God's universe. To them all life is animate and vocal. Bryant sings: "To him who in the love of nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language. In all the phenomena of nature, there is nothing more beautiful than the rainbow which spans the passing storm, one foot resting in victory upon the breast of the tempest, the other in benediction upon the fruitful hills. Wordsworth exclaims:

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when life began
So is it now I am a man
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die."

John Burroughs takes Thoreau to task for saying, "Once it chanced that I stood in the very abutment of a rainbow's arch which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere and dazzled me as if I looked through a coloured crystal." "Is

it then possible to reach the end of the rainbow?" Burroughs asks. "Why did he not dig for the pot of gold buried there?" Then he says, "You can never see a rainbow either to right or left of you. It is about the most subtle and significant phenomenon that everyday nature presents to us. Unapproachable as a spirit, like a visitant of another world, yet the creation of the familiar sun and rain." These words of John Burroughs are beautiful indeed and they show a personal quality to every rainbow which has in it a mighty lesson on the relation of the individual to God. But to the thoughtful man, the chief beauty of the rainbow is not in its graceful arch nor in the blending of its matchless colours. It is in the fact that it is God's memorial and vocal with the Almighty's pledge. Every Christian should bow reverently before it, and recall how it is written, "I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a covenant between Me and the earth."

What God has done in the heavens man has done upon the earth. We are accustomed to build memorials for national deliverances. We have seen monuments on many a field of battle—at Bunker Hill and Saratoga, at Concord and Lexington, and on a hundred hilltops, North and South. We have seen the Belgian lion on the field of Waterloo, and recall how Victor Hugo said that it was the right arm of God stretched out that won the victory, and not fresh troops brought in at a decisive hour. We have had memorials of our own but recently set in place

> *"Where poppies blow*
> *Between the crosses, row on row."*

"In each cemetery," says Kipling, "there should stand a Cross of Sacrifice and an altar-like Stone of Remembrance."

But stronger than love of country is love of God and the memorials of God's deliverances, whether national or per-

sonal, dwarf all others. So Israel thought, and acted upon that thought. In the Scripture from which our text is taken, we have an account of Samuel celebrating the great victory of God over the Philistines by setting up the stone Ebenezer, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Its stony lips will be forever vocal to the thoughtful, devoted Israelite. Earlier still in Israel's history, when the Promised Land had been entered, with the dangers of the desert, of famine, and of foes all over, Joshua, the old hero, gathered Israel at Shechem. He rehearsed the deliverances of God, and bound them in a solemn covenant that they had not come hither as a tribe of the desert—a wild bedouin horde—but by the hand of God, and would henceforth seek His glory and do His will. He made them take a solemn oath and lest they should forget it, set up a stone for a memorial. That would never forget, would never be dumb, nor bear false witness. Solemnly the old warrior says, "Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us. It shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest you deny your God." How that stone takes on importance and significance as the memorial of a great deliverance! In it, the blessings and cursings of God are personified, and although no graver traced afresh upon the granite the declaration of God, still every denunciation and every deliverance is marked there, with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond.

There is a sense, too, in which men, themselves, become memorials of the power and love of God. Take Joshua, for an example. I am hero-worshipper enough to go a long way, were it possible to see him. What a memorial he was! At the commencement of his career, God said to him, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. Be strong and of good courage, for the Lord is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." When he came to die at the age of one hundred and ten, he said, "Not one

thing of all the Lord promised hath failed." In the presence of Joshua, faith in God came easy. St. Paul was another memorial of God and for himself he said, " Trouble me not, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

But as a memorial of the power of God, nothing impresses me quite so much as the wonderful deliverance God has wrought for men in spiritual things. The changed life of the one time sinner is a testimonial and a memorial of a great battle and a glorious victory, where God Himself was captain of the host and the enemy routed like Pharaoh in the sea. Such a man, though he be silent as the Sphynx, is a memorial of the power of God and a witness which halts the thoughtless and forces the flippant to an acknowledgment that a miracle has been wrought.

Next to men themselves, are the places in individual life which testify to the footprints of God. How the old homestead becomes a treasure-house of holy memories with the passing of the years! Do you remember the room where Father and Mother went to pray, and of which you might paraphrase the sweet hyperbole of the Apostle John and say, that you suppose if all the prayers offered there were printed, the room itself would not contain the books which should be printed. Perhaps the old wall and the fireplace heard glad notes of holy triumph, as some one you loved went hence in the glorious assurance of life everlasting. Faith in God and all things good would come easy to you in such a home, and every room would be a treasure-chamber, a whispering gallery of heaven, where the voices of other days ceaselessly echo in prayer and song, " for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which He spake unto us. It shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest you deny your God." As Phillips Brooks has said, there are some who have felt nothing deeply, enjoyed nothing intensely, suffered nothing very keenly in the old home, so that, any morning they could

pack up and be gone, with hardly a suspicion of pain. But intensity of living gives sacredness to every spot that has helped to make life worth while.

I think this applies, especially, to a man's church—the building in which one has found God, where he has climbed step by step, the steep ascent, where he has faced his trials and sorrows and won his victories; that place ought to be unspeakably dear to his soul. A man may change his church from a sense of duty, or do so with tears because it must be done, but he will never lightly pass from the place where the deep things of God have come to his soul, nor fail to honour it as a memorial to Him, nor cease to labour and pray with all his might for its prosperity. To that church you came, when the scent of orange blossoms was in the air. At her altars you made your holy covenant, and from that sacred place you turned with your bride, to face the joys and sorrows of life. When the little children came, you stood at the same altar and made a sacred covenant that their lives should be dedicated to the noblest and the best, that they should be given the blessed opportunity to grow up under Christian culture and so become active members of the Church of God. And when at last the graver of the years cut deep furrows in your brow and the fresh cheeks of your bride grew wrinkled, and her hands began to tremble, and her feet grew weary in the way, the same thing happened to you as happened with Jacob when Rachael fell asleep at Bethlehem. You brought the sacred dust to God's house and halted it for a little at God's altar, ere you bore it out into God's Acre. I should think a place with such memories would be unspeakably dear to you and that the arches of such a church would forever echo with the solemn words, " These have heard all the words of your God, and are a memorial unto you, lest you forget."

There is a sense in which the same thing is true of one's

college or university. There is no period in life which should mean quite so much as student days—the fellowship of kindred minds, the touch of the intellectuality and personality of the world's great thinkers, the dawning of the vision splendid, the hour of the soul's awakening. Small wonder that Daniel Webster so moved the Supreme Court in the Dartmouth College case, as he described his own debt to that institution. The eyes of the dark-browed orator, the great expounder of the constitution, filled with tears as he called Dartmouth " a little college " and added, " But some of us love her."

The older you are the better you ought to be, the stronger in faith, the more in love with your work, the purer in heart, the more certain of the ultimate and glorious triumph of your Lord, and the more eager to walk with happy feet along the path thickly studded with the memorials of God.

Years ago, I followed for many miles the trail of the pilgrims on their way to the tomb of Mohammed at Mecca. I saw little piles of stones by the wayside and I asked, " What are these? " " The pilgrims who passed this way had prayed to the Prophet and he answered their prayers," my dragoman replied, " and these are the memorials which they set up to remind themselves of it if ever they came this way again, and to testify to every passer-by that the Prophet hears and answers prayer." If a follower of Mohammed could feel that way, how ought you to feel? How busy you ought to be setting up these cairns of memory —Eben-ezers by the way, each ceaselessly saying, " Hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

And now I have a personal message to my reader. You and I and God are the only ones concerned. Let me retire with you into the sacred places of your own life. I am looking down a path, short for some of you, longer for others, winding back to the days of your youth. Back there at the

beginning, with the fragrance of apple-blossoms and clover in the air, I see you standing with a happy, eager look in your eyes, and turning to the world a morning face. There is a little white memorial there by the wayside. Will you tell me what it is? "I was a child when it was set up," I think I hear you say, "and at my mother's knee I learned her simple faith and trust in God. Since then, I have found out that God's first altar is a mother's knee. The best I knew as a little child I promised to be true to God and to give my life to His service, and so with my childish hands I set up that little memorial to the greatest event that had happened in my life, so that I might ever be reminded of my holy pledge." That was a beautiful thing to do. I am so glad you did it. But as I come down the path with you there is another white marble and around its crest there seems to be twined a wreath of orange blossoms. What is that? "I read in the Bible that a good wife is from the Lord," you reply, "and on the day when He gave me such an one, and we went to our little home, where with love unspeakable we hung the crane and started our happy life together, we said as we dedicated the family altar, 'Let us put up this memorial and let us never forget the solemn pledge that we made to one another and to God, that we will be true.'" What a blessed thing it would be if all wedded couples did that!

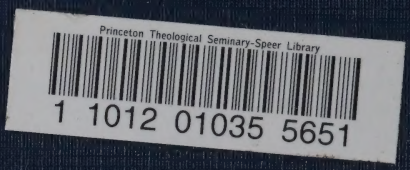
But still nearer to me, I see a stately monument. What is that? "That is a memorial to a deliverance which God wrought for me in a time of business stress and anxiety," is your answer. "I was at my wit's end. I turned to men whom I supposed were my friends, and thought they might give me help; but they were burdened as I was, and those who could have helped were not willing to do so. In my extremity I called upon God, and in ways that I could not understand He wrought out my deliverance, gave me mar-

velous aid and saved me from bankruptcy and disaster. He preserved my soul alive, and as it was His hand that helped me, I set up this memorial to God's loving care." Would that every business man might do the same.

But still nearer there is another seemly monument. What is that? "I was sick unto death," you tell me. "Through eyes that were almost closed I saw the doctor shake his head; I heard him whisper to my family, 'There is no hope,' and I turned my face to the wall and prayed, 'O God, do not let me die now. There is so much I ought to have done, so much I would like to do. Spare me a little longer and I will do it.' And the Lord heard my prayer." I am glad He did and I hope you have kept your promise.

But here is a broken column. What is that? "Do not ask me about that," you say, almost in a whisper. "I cannot talk about it at any length. There is only this to say: The hands that had ministered to me were folded, and the eyes which had been my beacon light for many a year were closed, and I was in bitter despair. I walked God's Acre with a broken heart, but as I journeyed there, the same Presence which met the women in the Garden appeared unto me and said, 'They are not here, they are risen.' Then there came to my soul the vision of the life to come, a glorious and eternal fellowship, and I heard my Master say, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoso liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' And so with a great song of joy and eternal hope in my soul I turned again to pursue my pilgrimage 'until the day break and the shadows flee away.'"

I am persuaded that with all these memorials of God about your path, you will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord, and hold inviolate the sacred vows you made Him, when He brought deliverance to your soul.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